

DETERMINANT FACTORS FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF
SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES)
IN SPORTS COACHING BUSINESS INDUSTRY IN
MALAYSIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia, many small businesses failed before their 5th anniversary. Small businesses made up a major percentage of the businesses and provide jobs for 50% of the populace. The purpose of this study was to explore the factors required by small businesses in Malaysia to sustain operations beyond the first five years. The underlying theories discussed in this study were Self-Determination Theory, Self-Management Competency Theory, and Resource-Based View. A review of the literature focused on small business failure and factors required to sustain a business longer than five years which contributed from a good service quality of sports coaching for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage and personal values of the sports coach who were passionate to conduct the effective sports coaching activity. The first stage of this research methodology was to conduct a qualitative research method which is by interviewing 10 small business owners in different fields of the sports industry. Then, the second stage was done by distributing a questionnaire developed from the interview sessions. This research targeted 225 respondents. Data analysis strategies consisted of correlation and regression using SPSS software. Factors required for small business sustainability were: (a) effective strategizing, (b) flexible financial capital management, (c) human capital development, and (d) market positioning and sales. The research found that small business owners in sports businesses were passionate about starting up their businesses and have the necessary skills to strategize effectively and manage capital, thus sustaining their business beyond five years. Information derived from this study may assist small business owners in starting successful companies that support employees, other companies, communities, and families, contributing to the development of the Malaysian economy.

ملخص البحث

في ماليزيا، فشلت العديد من الشركات الصغيرة حتى قبل الذكرى السنوية الخامسة لتأسيسها. شكلت الشركات الصغيرة نسبة كبيرة من الشركات وتوفر فرص عمل لـ 50٪ من السكان. كان الغرض من هذه الدراسة استكشاف العوامل المطلوبة من الشركات الصغيرة في ماليزيا للحفاظ على العمليات بعد السنوات الخمس الأولى. كانت النظريات الأساسية التي تمت مناقشتها في هذه الدراسة هي نظرية تقرير المصير، ونظرية كفاءة الإدارة الذاتية، والنظرة القائمة على الموارد. ركزت مراجعة الأدبيات على فشل الشركات الصغيرة والعوامل المطلوبة للحفاظ على الأعمال التجارية لأكثر من خمس سنوات والتي ساهمت في جودة خدمة التدريب الرياضي الجيدة لتحقيق ميزة تنافسية مستدامة والقيم الشخصية للمدرب الرياضي الذي كان متحمسًا لإجراء نشاط تدريب رياضي فعال. كانت المرحلة الأولى من منهجية البحث هذه هي إجراء طريقة بحث نوعية من خلال مقابلة 10 من أصحاب الأعمال الصغيرة في مجالات مختلفة من صناعة الرياضة. ثم تم إجراء المرحلة الثانية من خلال توزيع استبيان تم تطويره من جلسات المقابلة. استهدف هذا البحث 225 مستجيبًا. تتكون استراتيجيات تحليل البيانات من الارتباط والانحدار باستخدام برنامج SPSS. كانت العوامل المطلوبة لاستدامة الأعمال الصغيرة هي: (أ) التخطيط الاستراتيجي الفعال، (ب) إدارة رأس المال المالي المرنة، (ج) تنمية رأس المال البشري، و (د) تحديد موقف السوق والمبيعات. وجد البحث أن أصحاب الأعمال الصغيرة في مجال الأعمال الرياضية كانوا متحمسين لبدء أعمالهم ولديهم المهارات اللازمة للتخطيط الاستراتيجي الفعال وإدارة رأس المال، وبالتالي استدامة أعمالهم بعد خمس سنوات. قد تساعد المعلومات المستمدة من هذه الدراسة أصحاب الأعمال الصغيرة في بدء شركات ناجحة تدعم الموظفين والشركات الأخرى والمجتمعات والأسر، مما يساهم في تنمية الاقتصاد الماليزي.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Mohd Rashid Jamiran

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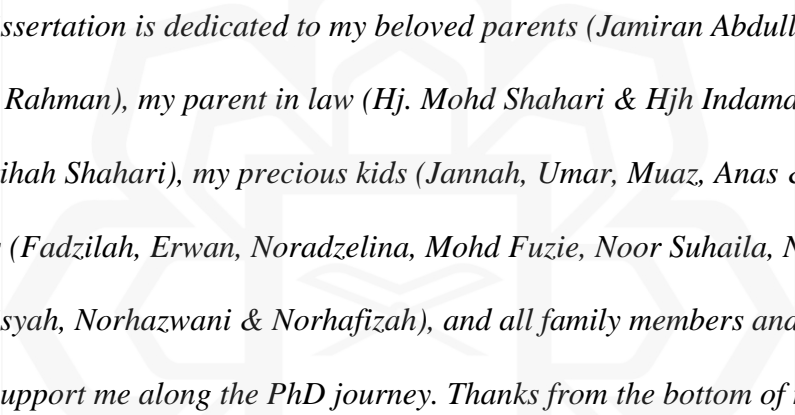
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This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents (Jamiran Abdullah & Rosimah And Rahman), my parent in law (Hj. Mohd Shahari & Hjh Indamah), my wife (Fatimah Shahari), my precious kids (Jannah, Umar, Muaz, Anas & Iman), my siblings (Fadzilah, Erwan, Noradzelina, Mohd Fuzie, Noor Suhaila, Noor Hawa, Siti Nor Aisyah, Norhazwani & Norhafizah), and all family members and relatives who support me along the PhD journey. Thanks from the bottom of my heart

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provided an ontological analysis of the study from practice, policy, and theory. From the practice, the sustainability factor for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in sports coaching has resulted from the superior performance of many sectors and sub-sectors of services. Such performance has been supported by various economic policies together with funding from the government for SMEs in many sectors. The theoretical concern of the study was about determinant theories on SME performance in services.

1.1 BACKGROUND STUDY

A business is known as an organization or an enterprise entity that is engaged with commercial, industrial, and professional activities which are then divided into various types and forms (Storey, 1994; Karadag, 2015; Edoun, Mbohwa & Bhia, 2019). One of the popular forms of business is the small-owner-operated business or better known as SME. Karadag (2015) argued that the SMEs are not having strong position in the market. Karadag (2015) incorporated Storey (1994)'s SMEs as separate entities of enterprises with a relatively small share of the market which is managed by self-owners with their own ways without any formalized management structure (Storey, 1994, p. 180). The main criteria that are used to identify whether a company is an SME or not and which category they fall into are through the number of employees, the total gross assets value, and the total turnover (Edoun, Mbohwa & Bhila, 2019, p. 2821). These enterprises are then classified into micro, small or medium-sized enterprises.

However, there is no universal definition of SME, since the economy for each country is different and some specific legislation in each country could influence the standards of SME (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016). Nevertheless, the term SME is used interchangeably worldwide. A lot of previous research done (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016) where SMEs are claimed

to be the main catalyst of economic development. Pletnev and Barkhatov (2016) also assert that, in many European countries, SMEs contribute approximately 56% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Furthermore, Karadag (2015) stated that SMEs are called the backbone of the European economy since they constitute 98% of all enterprises within the European Union region. Across the globe, SMEs are responsible for a substantial contribution to the GDP, and they play a vital role in the elevation of poverty.

SMEs have GDP growth rate. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the real GDP growth rate for SMEs averaged 6.6% from 2011 to 2017, surpassing the overall economy's average of 5.2% during the same period. In 2022, Malaysia's economy rebounded with a real GDP growth rate of 8.7%, following a contraction of 5.6% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While specific data for SMEs in 2022 is not readily available, the overall economic recovery suggests a positive trend for SMEs (DOSM, 2023).

In contrast, other Asian economies experienced varied growth rates. For instance, China's GDP growth rate was 3.0% in 2022, down from 8.1% in 2021. While Japan's economy grew by 1.7% in 2022, a slight increase from 1.0% in 2021. South Korea's GDP growth rate was 2.6% in 2022, down from 4.1% in 2021. These figures indicate that while Malaysia's SMEs have historically outpaced the overall economy, the growth dynamics in 2022 varied across different countries in the region. (Department of Economic Planning Unit, 2022).

However, the success of SMEs depends greatly on their management, especially the head of the business, since they do not have proper management as compared to large enterprises. Gherghina et al. (2020) proposed that although SMEs are crucial for economic development, they are risky towards encountering a lot of funding barriers which caused them to closure, and these enterprises are believed to have a higher failure rate every year. The owners of SMEs usually fund their business with their own assets. Bateman and Snell (2009) stated that the failure rate of SMEs is recorded as the highest in comparison to any other business (as cited in Edoun et al., 2019, p. 2824). Hence, a lot of efforts were developed to help the sustainability of these enterprises.

For example, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Bin Haji Mohd Yassin stated that Government and Bank Negara Malaysia could only provide additional funds worth RM4.5 billion to the SMEs owners through several initiatives. A total of 148 Government programs with a substantial amount of up to RM5.7 billion had also benefited 541,337 SMEs in the service sector during 2017. These programs were monitored and reported in the SME Integrated Plan of Action (SMEIPA). SMEs assume a pivotal role as the driver of economic growth where they account.

As of 2023, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Malaysia comprised 96.9% of all business establishments, totaling 1,101,725 firms (SMECorp, 2024). As **breakdown by business size including microenterprises: 69.7%** (767,421 firms), **small enterprises: 28.5%** (314,465 firms) and **medium enterprises: 1.8%** (19,839 firms). These figures reflect a significant increase from 907,065 MSMEs in 2015, indicating an average annual growth rate of 2.5% over the period.

In 2022, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM) reported that the number of establishments in the country stood at 1.09 million, marking a 2.5% increase from previous years. The gross output for the overall economic sectors improved by 6.4% annually, reaching RM3.85 trillion. These statistics underscore the substantial role of MSMEs in Malaysia's economy, particularly within the services and construction sectors.

Nonetheless, a large amount of SME businesses was forced to shut down recently due to the pandemic crisis. According to the statement of the Entrepreneurship Development and Cooperation Ministry (MEDAC) of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, a total of 32,469 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of various industries have been forced to cease operations between March and September 2020 (Adam, 2020). This statement is supported based on the Companies Commission of Malaysia's (SSM) report between March and October where the ministry reported that a total of 31,190 business entities have filed for cessation (Vinod, 2020). A survey showed that micro-entrepreneurs were the most affected by the economic fallout during the MCO phase of Covid-19 as most of them had yet to receive government assistance (Adam, 2020; Carvalho, Sivanandam, Rahim & Tan, 2020). The continuous issue of Covid-19

had greatly affected and influence all forms of businesses especially the small business owner who fund their business with their own assets.

Even so, Datuk Seri M Saravanan, a former Human Resource Minister of Malaysia commented that the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) recorded 221 employers closed their businesses despite having received aid under SOCSO's Wage Subsidy Programme (WSP) (Achariam, 2020). Various industries have been affected by the current situation, such as the food industry, tourism industry as well as sports industry since most of the outdoor activities were prohibited during the Covid-19 crisis. These industries faced a sustainability crisis as people were forced to stay at home and lessen their consumption of outdoor activities since it could lead to a higher number of Covid-19 cases.

Hence, this study aimed to find out the factors that could affect the sustainability of the sports coaching business as one of the service sectors in SME industries in Malaysia. According to Suntharalingam and Sellathurai (2017), sports have become a major part of people's lives nowadays either as a career, entertainment, and enjoyment or for physical fitness to some extent that in learning institutions, sports are introduced as a course for study. It is supported by Guttman (2004) that claimed sports have also been deeply rooted in cultures all around the world (as cited in Hayduk, 2020, p. 140). Thus, like the education setting, a specialist in sports is needed for providing direction, giving instructions, and training which is usually known as a coach (Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017).

Research was done on the coaching job in the Malaysian context found out that the main problem for the job is the lack of resources (Abd Karim, 2016). Being a coach in Malaysia is not on the same level as in Europe. It could be a profession in Europe and well recognized, but it is not yet in Malaysia. The coaches in Malaysia are suffering from the absence of career pathways, added with the job has now become more and more complicated (Abd Karim, 2016, p. 22). Being a coach in a small business sometimes means that they are the one who manages the business themselves; thus, the workload becomes heavier instead of just coaching people to play sports.

Even so, people are still taking the chances, and the risks to start a small business in the sports industry. Hayduk (2020) stated that recently, there has been quite a bit of attention on sports entrepreneurship and proposed several categories of sports entrepreneurship (Hayduk, 2020, p. 135). For example, community-based entrepreneurship, social sports entrepreneurship, and corporate sports entrepreneurship. Since sports have been deeply rooted in every culture across the globe, sports events also becoming a routine for every country no matter how small an event is, or how big it is being conducted. Chalip and Leyns (2002) also discussed the issue of whether small businesses entrepreneur took the chance to produce additional revenue from sports events (as cited in Hayduk, 2020, p. 137).

Fitness centre industry is related to sports coaching business activity. The UK gyms and fitness centres industry has experienced significant growth over the past decade. In 2014, the industry was valued at approximately £2.8 billion. By 2019, the market value had increased to over £5 billion, with total membership exceeding 10 million individuals. This growth reflects a broader trend of increasing awareness and participation in physical fitness activities across the UK.

In 2024, the industry revenue is projected to reach an estimated £2.8 billion, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.1% over the past five years. This indicates a steady expansion, driven by factors such as rising health consciousness and the psychological benefits associated with regular physical activity. Notably, the Mental Health Foundation reports that regular exercise can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression by up to 30%, contributing to the industry's growth. (IBIS, 2024)

Looking ahead, the industry is expected to continue its upward trajectory, with projections indicating further growth in the coming years. This sustained expansion is anticipated to be influenced by ongoing trends in health and wellness, as well as the increasing availability of diverse fitness options catering to a wide range of preferences and needs.

Economic recession has meant that some gym-goers cancelled their gym membership or exercise independently. While other gym-goers have traded down to budget gyms such as Pure Gym, which do not require long-term contracts and charge less because they only offer basic services. As a result, established businesses like Fitness First and

LA Fitness suffered from falling membership numbers and been forced to sell or close their gyms.

This has impacted to many self-employed sports coach instructors and have had to change organizations. IBIS World suggests that industry revenue is currently worth £2.4 billion with an annual growth rate of 0.8% expected between 2010 and 2015. The industry is said to employ more than 38,000 people in over 1500 registered businesses. Roe (2009) noted that according to the Register of Exercise Professionals, the number of officially registered sports coaches/instructors acting as personal trainers in the United Kingdom has risen by 50% since 2005 and now numbers over 19,000. Thus, in conclusion, self-employed sports coaches/instructors is said to represent a significant grouping of microbusiness sole proprietors in the United Kingdom, with minimal extant literature exploring their existence.

As such, due to Covid-19 pandemic, an online survey of 2009 adults ages 24 was conducted in the USA; with a total number of 2,009 adults ages 24, as of January 2020, resulted that 59% of Americans did not plan on renewing their gym memberships once the pandemic is over. More than 56% of those surveyed resulted that the pandemic helped them find “more affordable” ways to get exercise and live a healthier lifestyle nation (TD Ameritrade, 2020). This shown showed that Covid-19 pandemic is impacting the sports coaching business industry across the globe, which led small industry in sports business need to have a strategic future plan and how they can sustain their business in the future.

However, it t is argued that sports consumers are more highly identified with the brands they align with and maintain a deep emotional commitment to that brand for their entire lifetime (Hayduk, 2020, p. 139). Thus, small business enterprises have less opportunity to attract customers, and had to invest more to market their products, including the coaching services. Several factors should be investigated to find out how small business owners can maintain their business in a longer period despite the competitive markets. The sustainability of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia is a critical issue, as these enterprises face unique challenges and opportunities. The following list the key challenges (Abd Karim, 2016; Hayduk, 2020).

Firstly, a significant contribution to economy and society (Hayduk, 2020, p. 139). SMEs in the sports coaching sector play a crucial role in promoting health and wellness, especially as Malaysia faces increasing public health challenges, such as rising obesity and lifestyle-related diseases. These businesses contribute to Malaysia's GDP by creating job opportunities, enhancing the quality of life, and fostering a culture of active living.

Secondly, specific challenges to sustainability namely individual factors, organizational challenges, and external factors (Abd Karim, 2016, p. 22). **For individual factors**, many sports coaching SMEs are founded by individuals with strong sports backgrounds (e.g., former athletes or coaches) but often lack formal business management skills. Personal values and entrepreneurial traits can influence the business's sustainability, but without structured development programs, these traits may not be fully leveraged. As for **organizational challenges**, there are limited financial resources and inconsistent cash flow hinder long-term planning and growth. Difficulty in adopting modern business practices, such as digital marketing and online service delivery, is a significant barrier for many small enterprises. Last but not least, the **external factors**. In terms of external factors, competition from larger organizations or international brands with better funding and resources. Besides, lack of government policies specifically tailored to support SMEs in the sports coaching sector. Low awareness among the public about the importance of investing in professional coaching services, especially in rural areas.

Thirdly, two gaps highlighted in research. Firstly, the data participation. Studies show that sports coaches are less inclined to participate in online research or engage in broad discussions about industry challenges (Storey, 1994; Karadag, 2015; Neagu, 2016; Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). This limits the depth of insights and the development of effective policies (Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). **Secondly, Moderating Role of Personal Values.** Research indicates that while personal values play a role, their impact on business sustainability is not fully understood or effectively utilized (Storey, 1994; Karadag, 2015; Neagu, 2016; Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017).

Fourth, the government and institutional support. The Malaysian government has identified SMEs as a key pillar for economic growth, but sports coaching SMEs receive less attention compared to industries like manufacturing, food and beverages, or fashion (Neagu, 2016; Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). Initiatives like weekly sports carnivals or skill enhancement workshops could boost the sector by encouraging participation and promoting entrepreneurship.

Lastly, the potential for growth. With increasing awareness of health and fitness, there is a growing demand for professional sports coaching services (Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). The sports coaching industry aligns well with Malaysia's goals of promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing healthcare costs related to non-communicable diseases. The sustainability of SMEs in Malaysia's sports coaching industry is a serious issue that warrants focused attention. While the industry has significant potential to contribute to the economy and public health, challenges like limited resources, lack of entrepreneurial skills, and inadequate support hinder its growth (Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). A collaborative approach involving government policies, training programs, and industry-specific incentives is essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of these businesses.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The statement of problem is akin for the rationale of the research on the determinant factors for Sustainability of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

Sustainability in this context refers to the long-term ability of sports coaching SMEs to maintain and grow their business operations while overcoming challenges in a dynamic market environment (Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). Given the global trend toward a more health-conscious society, sports coaching businesses have immense potential to grow. However, many face unique sustainability challenges, such as financial instability, competition, market saturation, lack of skilled coaches, and dependency on seasonal demand (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016). In Malaysia, there is increasing

interest in fitness, sports, and overall well-being, but the sustainability of sports coaching SMEs remains uncertain due to factors like the economic environment, government regulations, lack of digital adoption, and insufficient business management capabilities (Neagu, 2016; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). As a result, many SMEs in the industry struggle with maintaining profitability and scaling their operations.

Despite the importance of SMEs to Malaysia's economy, very few studies have focused specifically on the sports coaching industry's sustainability, especially with respect to the unique dynamics of this sector. Most existing research on SME sustainability tends to focus broadly on manufacturing or services sectors without addressing industry-specific challenges (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016). Therefore, there is a clear gap in understanding the specific determinant factors for sustainability that are unique to the sports coaching business. Previous research has not adequately explored the role of key factors like client retention, brand loyalty, business management practices, sports infrastructure, and the educational background of coaches in driving the long-term sustainability of sports coaching SMEs (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016). Empirical studies focusing on how these factors interact with each other within Malaysia's specific socio-economic and regulatory landscape are scarce.

From a practical standpoint, small business owners in the sports coaching industry often lack access to tailored resources and support for sustainable growth. Many sports coaches in Malaysia operate independently, lacking formal business training and knowledge on how to develop sustainable business practices (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016). This results in missed opportunities for diversifying their services, incorporating digital tools for engagement, and building long-term strategic business plans.

Moreover, government policies and support systems for SMEs in sports coaching are underdeveloped, and there is limited guidance for entrepreneurs on navigating the challenges of competition, market volatility, and changing consumer preferences (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016). This gap creates a pressing need for more contextual research that can influence policy and help build a more sustainable ecosystem for these businesses.

There is also a theoretical gap in understanding the specific frameworks that can be applied to the sports coaching sector in the context of sustainability. Much of the existing theoretical work on SME sustainability relies on models that are broad and general, and not adapted for specific industries like sports. The existing theories often fail to incorporate the distinct challenges faced by sports coaches such as the seasonality of demand or the changing nature of consumer preferences and their impact on business viability (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016). By focusing on sports coaching businesses, this research can help in developing theoretical frameworks that account for the relationship between coaching services, client loyalty, and long-term business growth in the context of Malaysia's evolving sports industry.

This study specifically investigated the factors that contribute to the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching industry in Malaysia. Key areas of focus will include (a) effective strategizing, (b) flexible financial capital management, (c) human capital development, and (d) market positioning and sales. The research will highlight how a combination of these factors can help sports coaching SMEs create a solid foundation for sustainability, even in the face of changing market dynamics.

The problem statement of this research articulated through the lenses of empirical, practical, and theoretical gaps. In term of empirical gap, there have been limited studies examined the specific challenges and opportunities that impact the sustainability of sports coaching SMEs in Malaysia (Karadag, 2015; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Neagu, 2016). Understanding these contextual factors is essential for crafting policies and strategies that foster long-term growth. In terms of the practical gap, there is a need to provide actionable insights for sports coaching SMEs to improve their business sustainability. The research guided SMEs in adopting best practices that can help them compete effectively in a crowded market. Finally, the theoretical gap: There is a need for a customized theoretical model that addresses the unique characteristics of sports coaching SMEs, offered a framework for understanding sustainability in this specific context.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. How sustainable are the SMEs in the sports coaching business in Malaysia?

- ii. What are the determinant factors for the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching business in Malaysia?
- iii. Is there any mediating effect of quality of services on the relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs' sustainability in the sports coaching business in Malaysia?
- iv. Are there any differences in terms of business owners' personal value in sustaining SMEs sports coaching business in Malaysia?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the sustainability (years of survival and financial stability) of SMEs in the sports coaching business in Malaysia.
- To examine the determinant factors for the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.
- To investigate the mediating effect of quality of services on the relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs' sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.
- To determine the moderating effects of the business owners' personal value in sustaining SMEs sports coaching business in Malaysia.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research provided an overview and detailed analysis of the determinant factors that could help small business owners in sustaining sustain their business. Business sustainability is potentially driven by the business owner; hence, this contribution will would help to provide more information and knowledge for them in managing to manage their businesses. Moreover, this study aimed to find out whether the quality of services would affect the relationship between the determinant factors and the sustainability of SMEs. Although there were numerous studies conducted on the scope of sustainability of SMEs influenced by the determinant factors, yet little research was found in a Malaysian context. Therefore, this study was conducted to expand the existing knowledge by offering a model specifically on the sports coaching business.

The current research holds high contributory significance in various aspects. This study brought importance to the field of learning in the context of sports coaching business entrepreneurs in Malaysia. Eventually, it is crucial for a better understanding

of nature in the business sports coaching industry in Malaysia, which contributed to the development of a high-income nation (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2017).

1.6 OPERATIONALIZED DEFINITION

The following were the definitions of the specific terms used in this research.

1.6.1 Small Medium Enterprise in Malaysia

Small Medium Enterprise in Malaysia is defined as the existing qualifying criteria i.e., sales turnover and employment remains, but the threshold has been increased to, (i) Manufacturing sector: Sales turnover not exceeding RM50 million or full-time employees not exceeding 200 people (ii) Services and other sectors: Sales turnover not exceeding RM20 million or full-time employees not exceeding RM75 million (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2017).

Figure 1.1 illustrates the classification of businesses into Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) based on criteria such as revenue and the number of employees. Micro businesses, have a revenue of less than RM300,000 and fewer than five employees. These are the smallest businesses, often consisting of individual entrepreneurs or very small teams, operating on a small scale with limited resources. Small businesses have revenues ranging from RM300,000 to RM15 million and employ between 5 and 75 individuals. These businesses are larger than micro enterprises and may include local shops, small factories, or service providers with moderate resources and workforce. Medium businesses generate revenue between RM15 million and RM50 million and employ between 75 and 200 people. These organizations are larger and more structured, bridging the gap between small businesses and large corporations. The classification reflects the distribution of businesses, with micro enterprises being the most numerous and medium enterprises being the least. Revenue and employee count are widely recognized global criteria for classifying MSMEs, and this classification is utilized by governments and organizations to design policies, allocate funding, and provide targeted support for businesses at different levels of scale.

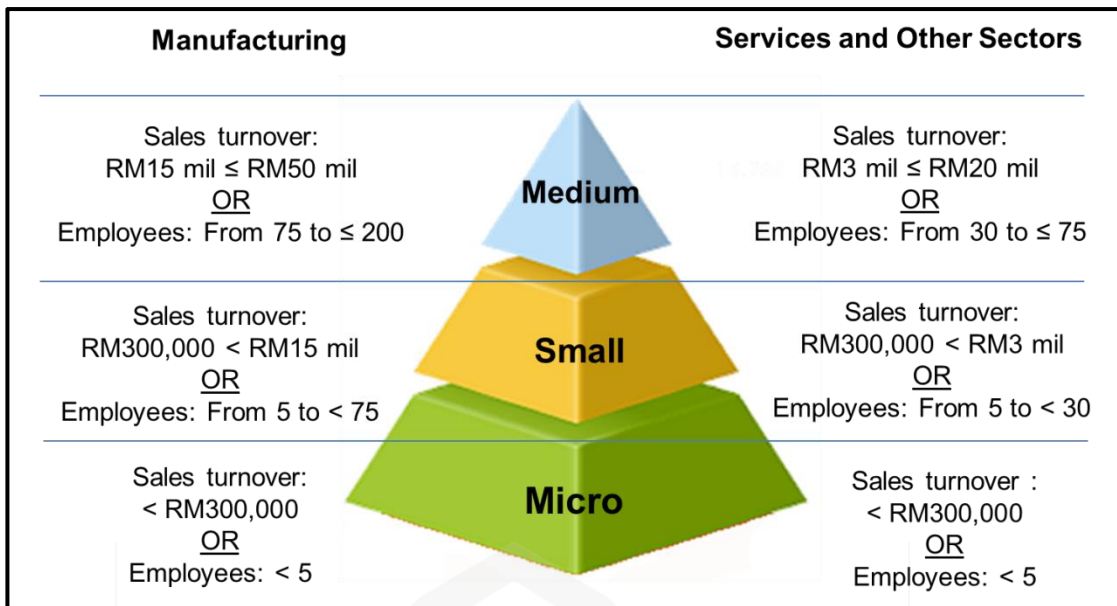


Figure 1.1: SME Definition in Malaysia (*Source: SME Corporation Malaysia, 2017*)

1.6.2 Sports Industry

The sports industry is related to sports brand, sporting goods industry cluster, International Competition of Sports, and Sporting Good Company Financial Statement Analysis (Nie & Li, 2016; Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). A sports brand refers to a company, organization, or product associated with sports-related activities, equipment, apparel, or services, with well-known examples like Nike, Adidas, and Under Armour, which focus on athletic performance and lifestyle products. The sporting goods industry cluster represents a network of businesses, suppliers, service providers, and institutions geographically concentrated in a region and involved in producing and distributing sporting goods. This clustering fosters innovation, competitiveness, and efficiency through shared resources and collaboration. On a global scale, the International Competition of Sports encompasses events where athletes or teams from different nations compete in various disciplines, such as the Olympics, FIFA World Cup, and World Athletics Championships, promoting sportsmanship, cultural exchange, and national pride. Meanwhile, Sporting Goods Company Financial Statement Analysis involves

examining a company's financial health and performance through its income statement, balance sheet, and cash flow statement, enabling stakeholders to assess profitability, operational efficiency, and growth potential in the sporting goods industry.

Sport's industrial structure is closely linked to its development, and industrial structure optimization is crucial to facilitate sports industrial development. The relationship between a sport's industrial structure and its overall development, emphasizing the importance of optimizing this structure to enhance the growth and sustainability of the sports industry (Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Edoun et al., 2019). A sport's industrial structure refers to the organization and composition of various sectors within the industry, such as manufacturing (e.g., sports equipment), services (e.g., events management, coaching), and marketing (e.g., branding, sponsorship). A well-organized industrial structure ensures that production, distribution, and consumption work efficiently and cohesively. This structure significantly influences the industry's capacity to innovate, grow, and adapt to changing market demands by attracting investments, improving product and service quality, and creating employment opportunities, which contribute to the sport's popularity and financial success (Nie & Li, 2016). Optimizing the industrial structure involves reorganizing or improving the alignment of resources, processes, and stakeholders within the industry. This may include integrating technology, fostering collaborations across sectors (e.g., between manufacturers and event organizers), and focusing on sustainability to meet modern consumer expectations. By doing so, the sports industry can build a stronger foundation for growth, improve efficiency, reduce costs, and foster innovation, enabling it to respond effectively to global trends like e-sports, digital transformation, and the demand for personalized sports experiences. Ultimately, a well-optimized industrial structure ensures that resources and processes are aligned with market demands, driving sustainable development and economic growth in the sector.

1.6.3 Sports Coaching Business

A sports coach is an activity via modelling behaviour from a role model and learning on reward and punishment (Sims & Lorenzi, 1992). A sports coach facilitates learning and skill development by modeling behavior and using mechanisms of reward and

punishment. As a role model, the coach demonstrates desired techniques, strategies, attitudes, and discipline, allowing athletes to learn through observation and emulation. This includes showcasing proper movements, effective decision-making during games, and professional behavior on and off the field, a process rooted in social learning theory, which emphasizes learning by observing others. Additionally, coaches use positive reinforcement, such as praise, increased playtime, or tangible incentives, to encourage desirable behaviors like improved performance, teamwork, and discipline. Conversely, they apply punishments, such as extra drills, reduced playtime, or constructive criticism, to deter undesirable actions, such as skipping practice or unsportsmanlike behavior, aligning with behaviorist learning theories that focus on reinforcement and punishment. A coach's role extends beyond technical instruction, encompassing setting an example and shaping athletes' skills, discipline, and character. This ensures that athletes develop not only technical expertise but also the values and behaviors essential for success in sports and life (Storey, 1994; Karadag, 2015; Neagu, 2016; Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017).

In this context, sports coaches are a business owner who owns their sports coaching business. Indeed, sports coaches are not just professionals who provide training and guidance to athletes; they can also be business owners who operate and manage their own sports coaching businesses. This means they take on the dual role of a coach and an entrepreneur, overseeing various aspects of their enterprise (Karadag, 2015; Neagu, 2016; Suntharalingam & Sellathurai, 2017). As business owners, they are responsible for developing their brand, marketing their services, and managing client relationships. They may specialize in a particular sport, age group, or skill level, tailoring their programs to meet the needs of their target audience. Additionally, they handle administrative tasks such as scheduling sessions, managing finances, and ensuring the business complies with relevant regulations. By owning their sports coaching business, they have the flexibility to design unique training methodologies, build a team of assistant coaches if needed, and expand their offerings to include workshops, camps, or online training. This entrepreneurial approach allows them to scale their business while maintaining the quality and effectiveness of their coaching.

1.6.4 Sustainability in Business

Grudzewski et al. (2010) defined the concept of sustainability as durability and the company's ability to continuously learn, develop and reorient the business to stay lasting in the market with a distinctive position (as cited in Szczepańska-Woszczyzna & Kurowska-Pys, 2016, p. 59).

A sustainable company does not only mean the business stay in the same position for years, but also it should create long-term financial value and making positive social change by actively reducing their organizations' impact on the environment as well as understanding the interconnectivity of sustainability elements (Szczepańska-Woszczyzna & Kurowska-Pys, 2016, p. 59).

Indeed, sustainability in business extends beyond mere longevity to encompass the ability to adapt, innovate, and maintain a distinctive position in the market. A truly sustainable company not only generates long-term financial value but also contributes to positive social change by minimizing environmental impact and recognizing the interconnected nature of sustainability elements. This holistic approach ensures that businesses remain relevant, responsible, and resilient in a dynamic marketplace.

1.6.5 Sustainability Factors

Small business sustainability hinges on the interplay of several critical factors, namely , (i) effective strategizing, (ii) flexible financial capital management, (iii) human capital development and, (iv) market positioning and sales (Buowari, 2015). Buowari (2015) argued that effective strategizing is essential as it provides a clear roadmap by aligning the business's vision and mission with actionable goals, that can enable enterprises to anticipate challenges and adapt to evolving market trends. Thus, without strategic foresight, small businesses risk losing competitive advantages and stagnating in a dynamic environment.

The other factor is flexible financial capital management. According to Bouwari (2015), this factor is essential to ensure businesses can respond swiftly to economic fluctuations

and unforeseen expenses. A lack of financial agility often leads to operational inefficiencies and, ultimately, insolvency.

Furthermore, human capital development is indispensable; businesses that invest in their employees' skills and well-being foster innovation and maintain operational efficiency. Neglecting this aspect risks high turnover rates and diminished productivity.

Finally, effective market positioning and sales strategies are critical to differentiating a business from competitors and driving revenue growth. Firms that fail to define their market position or neglect promotional efforts struggle to attract loyal customers, undermining long-term success.

These factors are deeply interconnected, as effective strategizing informs market positioning, while sound financial management underpins investments in human capital and marketing. A holistic approach to these elements is not just beneficial but necessary for small businesses to achieve resilience and sustainability in a competitive landscape.

1.6.6 Personal Value

Personal values are desirable to an individual and represent what is important to someone. Personal Value is the inner individual. It is the action of the entrepreneur who sets up “new combinations” via a new method which requires changes of the process (Schumpeter, 2002, p. 412). An entrepreneur is people who are productive to plan and organizing the opportunities into demand in a creative way (Schumpeter, 2004d, p. 254).

1.6.7 Quality of Services

Quality of services from coaches to players or customers is important to determine their satisfaction that leads to good communication and good results of the sports coaching activities. Customer satisfaction is a result of customer loyalty. Heskett et al. (1994) stated that customers will perceive their value by the result produced by the service

provider. A loyal customer or repeating customer will lead to the sustainability of the sports coaching business.

1.6.8 Effective strategizing

Effective strategizing involves measurable activities such as conducting SWOT analysis, setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) objectives, implementing key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress, and executing plans with regular performance reviews to ensure alignment with organizational goals.

1.6.9 Flexible financial capital management

Flexible financial capital management is demonstrated through the use of dynamic budgeting techniques, liquidity management practices, real-time financial tracking tools, and scenario planning to reallocate resources based on changing business priorities and market fluctuations.

1.6.10 Human capital development

Human capital development includes structured programs such as training workshops, mentoring, continuous professional development (CPD) courses, career advancement pathways, and performance appraisals with actionable feedback. Metrics such as employee productivity, retention rates, and skills acquisition rates are used to measure its success

1.6.11 Market positioning and sales

Market positioning and sales involve activities like market segmentation, competitive analysis, developing unique selling propositions (USPs), targeted advertising campaigns, and deploying sales strategies (e.g., upselling, cross-selling). Key performance indicators such as market share, sales growth, and customer acquisition costs are used to evaluate effectiveness.

1.7 SUMMARY

The chapter presents the background of the study with an overview of the Malaysian SMEs with the sports coaching business industry as a context. It covers problem statements, research questions, and research objectives to be achieved by this proposed research. The next chapter will present a literature review pertaining to the problem statement, research questions and research objectives to identify the knowledge gap. In addition, it will also discuss the foundation theories that underpin the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter firstly presented three underpinning theories related to the research which are Self-Determination Theory, Self-Management Competency Theory, and Resource-Based View, accordingly. Each of the variables in this study was discussed based on the past research to stimulate the hypotheses. This helps to place this work in the context of what has already been done, allowing comparisons to be made and providing a framework for further research and a gap of knowledge. At the end of the chapter, a theoretical framework was generated to provide a clearer view of the whole research.

2.2 UNDERPINNING THEORIES

This section explores the foundational theories that form the conceptual framework for the study, focusing on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Self-Management Competency Theory, and the Resource-Based View (RBV). SDT highlights the critical role of intrinsic motivation and the fulfillment of psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—in driving individual behavior and fostering sustained engagement, which are essential for personal and organizational growth. Complementing this, Self-Management Competency Theory emphasizes the development of key skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, adaptability, and emotional regulation, enabling individuals to effectively manage their responsibilities and maximize their performance. Meanwhile, RBV provides a strategic perspective, asserting that a firm's competitive advantage stems from its valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources, including internal assets like knowledge, skills, and organizational culture. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the synergy between individual motivation, competency development, and the strategic deployment of resources to achieve long-term success and sustainability.

2.2.1 Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) grew out of the work of psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, as a comprehensive theoretical framework to study human motivation and personality in an organization and society (Coccia, 2019). It was first introduced in 1985 in the book *Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation in Human Behavior* by Deci and Ryan. Some experts argued that SDT is a metatheory that is made up of several sub-theories such as Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) and Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) (Legault, 2017). All these sub-theories fuse together to offer a comprehensive understanding of human motivation. Hence, as suggested by previous research (Coccia, 2019; Legault, 2017; Gaudreau, 2017), the central tenet of SDT is human motivation which implies that people tend to be driven by a need to grow and a need to gain fulfilment.

According to Schiefele (2009), motivation had various definitions, but this concept is often understood as the state of wanting to perform a specific activity in each situation (as cited in Gaudreau, 2017, p. 28). Motivations are usually divided into two types, which are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Thus, SDT basically explains both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which support personality development and behavioural self-regulation to improve the personal wellbeing and performance of people in organizations and society. However, SDT does not simply define intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, but also outlines how these motivations will influence some situational responses (Legault, 2017). Intrinsically motivated individuals are motivated to pursue goals and engage in activities that they find inherently enjoyable, significant, or challenging, while extrinsically motivated individuals are motivated to pursue a goal or complete a task for an external reward or tangible incentive (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Motivation includes the component of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These components are claimed to be the basic psychological needs of humans. The idea of basic psychological needs is that all individuals strive for autonomy (the need to feel free, self-directed, and in control of their behaviours and goals), competence (the need to feel effective), and relatedness (the need to connect closely with others and experience a sense of belonging) in order to grow (Legault, 2017; Gaudreau, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2002). Recent studies suggest that people, specifically employees, have a variety of needs such as job security, social fulfilment, and challenging job (Coccia, 2019). In fact, a human is born with the natural feeling of curiosity, and the strive for

learning, as well as the need to master new skills (Ryan & Deci 2000; Deci & Ryan 2004). In other words, people naturally want to strive towards self-growth by integrating new experiences, cultivating their needs, desires, and interests as well as connecting with others, and the outside world.

In a working environment, intrinsic motivation exists in the job itself and gives personal satisfaction to individuals, such as autonomy, recognition, and empowerment. When people are intrinsically motivated, their behaviour is motivated by their internal desire to do something for their own sake. For instance, some people might find enjoyment in doing certain activities, but some are not. O'Reilly et al. (1991) have suggested that intrinsic motivation may be more important for job involvement and affective commitment within organizations (as cited in Coccia, 2019). Thus, people with intrinsic motivation could perform better as they enjoy doing the job, in comparison to someone who did the job forcefully.

Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation is reward-driven behaviour or operant conditioning behaviour. It is a form of behaviour modification that uses rewards and punishment, to either increase or decrease the likelihood of a specific behaviour (Ryan & Deci 2000). SDT asserts that extrinsically motivated actions will also influence people's determinations as they are triggered by outside rewards and punishments. However, extrinsic motivation does not always be in the form of tangible rewards, but could also exist in the form of abstracts, such as fame and praise. Goals associated with extrinsic motivation, such as desiring money, fame, or good looks, are believed to hinder the fulfilment of innate needs, and be less likely to contribute to feelings of well-being when they are based on attempts to gain a sense of self-worth through external means (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999). Further, some experimental research inspired by SDT stated that monetary incentives could generate either positive or negative effects: (a) enhance extrinsic motivation; (b) threaten intrinsic motivation (Coccia, 2019). Although extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are often portrayed as separate and distinct, people are rarely driven by a single source of motivation in the pursuit of a goal. They could be motivated by both types of motivation at the same time.

Managers and leaders in an organization can foster this sense of self-determination by allowing their employees to take an active role. Not only in a large corporation, but also in small businesses, employers should offer their employees responsibilities, supports, encouragement, and provide meaningful feedback. It is easier for small business owners to implement this theory as their number of employees is

lesser than large corporations. However, it is suggested that employers do not overuse extrinsic rewards and motivation, as too many rewards can undercut intrinsic motivation (Legault, 2017). Both motivations should be balanced to increase their work performance, and at the same time to avoid the employees feeling underappreciated. Ryan and Deci (2000) affirmed that as people's behaviour becomes increasingly controlled by external rewards. People begin to feel less in control of their behaviour and intrinsic motivation is diminished. Motivation is needed for people in pursuing goals and objectives; thus, it is an important element to be considered in sustaining any business.

From Figure 2.1, the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) argues that human motivation and behavior are fundamentally shaped by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy reflects the need to feel in control of one's decisions, competence emphasizes the desire to feel effective in achieving goals, and relatedness underscores the importance of meaningful connections with others. These needs are not merely desirable but essential for fostering intrinsic motivation, where individuals engage in activities for inherent enjoyment or satisfaction. The model further delineates motivation on a continuum, ranging from intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation and, ultimately, to amotivation. While intrinsic motivation is the most autonomous and fulfilling, extrinsic motivation—when internalized as integrated or identified regulation—can also drive purposeful action. However, when extrinsic motivation becomes controlled, as seen in introjected and external regulation, it undermines personal autonomy, leading to disengagement or reduced satisfaction. The model's emphasis on the Perceived Locus of Causality (PLOC) reveals how individuals' perception of control over their actions influences their behavior, with autonomous motives producing better engagement and outcomes compared to controlling motives. Furthermore, the degree of internalization plays a pivotal role, as higher levels of internalization align external motives with personal values, resulting in more meaningful and sustained behavior. This theory compellingly demonstrates that meeting basic psychological needs is not optional but essential for driving motivation, promoting well-being, and achieving long-term engagement, whereas neglecting these needs results in controlled motivation or amotivation, hindering personal and organizational growth.

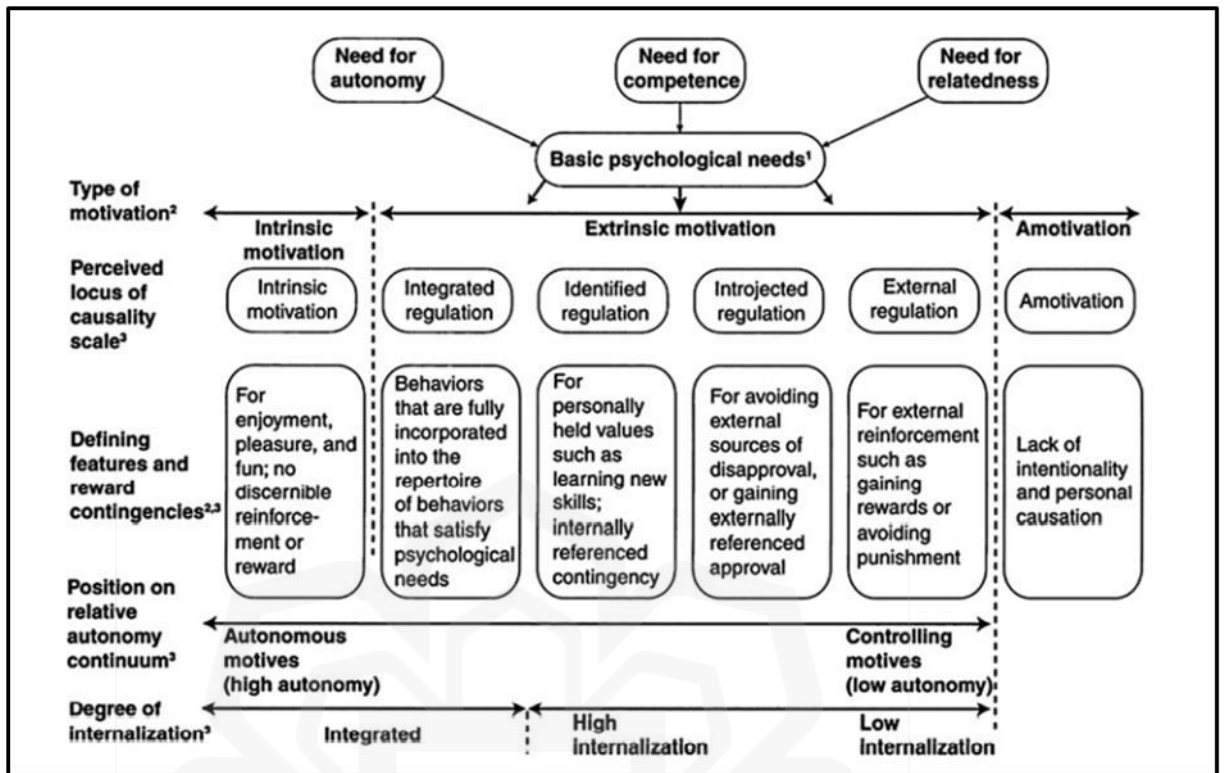


Figure 2.1: Self-Determination Theory (Source: Ryan & Deci, 2000)

2.2.2 Self-Management Competency Theory

All managers despite the management level, should possess specific competencies to keep the business in balance with its environment (Steyn & Staden, 2018). The theory of Self-Management Competency by Hellriegel, Jackson and Slocum (2005) includes the need for achievement, a desire to be independent, self-confidence, and the willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of the business. Need for achievement means that a person has a desire to strive for success or excellence in a competitive situation. It is one of the key personal attributes of successful entrepreneurs. High achievers take responsibility for attaining their goals, set moderately difficult goals, and want immediate feedback on how well they have performed (Hellriegel et al., 2007). A strong drive to achieve is something that sets successful entrepreneurs apart from everyone else.

Entrepreneurs set challenging but achievable goals for themselves, and their businesses. When they have achieved these goals, they set new ones immediately. The desire for independence is when entrepreneurs often seek independence from others. As a result, they may not be motivated to perform well in large, bureaucratic organizations. This is why self-management theory is suitable to be applied for small business owners.

An increasing number of organizations are now transforming their management strategies from control-oriented management towards self-management. Renn, Allen and Huning (2011) suggested that organizations should encourage their employees to have more responsibility, and to be more independent with their work activities. Align with the Self-Determination Theory, self-management practices will accommodate the employees' need for autonomy at the workplace (Chen & Chung, 2014). The basic self-management practices include self-assessment, setting goals, self-monitoring, and self-reinforcement (Vito, Kumanwee, & Cyracus, 2018). These practices helped to assist people's behaviour in achieving their goals.

Self-management increases internal motivation at the workplace and reduces the dependency on external ways of motivating (Vito et al., 2018). A successful self-management will be beneficial for an organization as it can enhance job satisfaction, job performance, job productivity, and career success (Renn et al., 2011). Small businesses are usually more flexible and adaptable in trusting the employees to make valid suggestions and decisions for the company. The involvement of employees in decision-making enhances their engagement with the organizations, which further improves their performance and reduces the turnover of employees (Vito et al., 2018). These involvements are interrelated with the basic psychological needs of humans who strive for more autonomy and decision-making authority (Zatzick & Iverson, 2011). It also helps the employee to internalize the organization's visions and therefore, it becomes an intrinsic motivation for the employee.

In cases where resources are limited or scarce to motivate employees, self-management can act as a way of internal motivation for the employees. This is especially important for small businesses that are facing resource scarcity compared to large corporations that might have better options in providing external rewards. Self-management practices can help the person to identify new motivational means, such as self-reward and self-praise, and finding motivating aspects of the task, such as personal development and fulfilling their values. If the employee can participate in planning their work tasks, creating evaluation criteria, and organizing their work conditions, they are

more motivated to perform their work. Hauser (2014) also asserts that motivation is the centre for work-related behaviour, as it causes employees to perform actions that are beneficial either for themselves or the organization.

Motivating employees is necessary for an organization to function properly as well to increase performance (Marques-Quinteiro & Curral, 2012). Furthermore, previous research (Christensen, 2010; Chen & Chung, 2014) suggests that self-management can become a powerful method of management and maintain the competitive advantage of an organization. Both theories of Self-Determination and Self-Management Competency are interrelated with each other as it focuses on the personal value of a person. It concerns more on the individual factors as in the employees' behaviour in sustaining a business. Hence, the next theory of Resource-Based View will provide the approach on the perspective of organizational behaviour.

2.2.3 Resource-Based View

Barney (1991) defined Resource-Based View (RBV) as a tool to examine the relationship between an organisation's internal attribute and its performance. Barney, Ketchen and Wright (2011) stated that it is used to explain and predict the firm's ability to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Edith Penrose in her book "*The Theory of the Growth of the Firm*" (1959) was the first one to observe the dependency of a company on resource availability, and she argued that the growth of an enterprise is dependent on realization and utilization of the resources (Baumane-Vitolina, 2013, p. 175). A broad layer of productive resource definitions was also devised by her, including factors: such as senior management teamwork abilities, entrepreneurship capability, and ability to observe benefits of implementation of a new product or service. RBV is often related to the social capital and innovation theories and the further development of RBV is a result of the theorization of the Knowledge-Based Approach (Baumane-Vitolina, 2013, p. 176)

Baumane-Vitolina (2013) mentioned that the most important enterprise resources are those that ensure the business activities contributing to long-term competitive strength (p. 174). Therefore, enterprise growth is largely determined by the company manager's experience, and information accessibility, as well as by available resources of an enterprise, that serve as a basis for further strategies and line of activity.

RBV put an emphasis on the identification and grouping of resources (Baumane-Vitolina, 2013, p. 175)

From the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective, a resource can be classified as a 'source of competitive advantage' if the resource will add value to the firm, is unique and rare, and hard to be imitated to add originality and value (Barney, 1991). Resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) form a basis for a firms' survival (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) and sustainable growth (Barney, 1991). Firms that use VRIN are more likely to develop internal resources that are difficult to replicate by outside organizations (Barney, 1991). VRIN can generate these resources through human resources management practices: such as the selective selection of workers, improved training quality and skill development, improved commitment and motivation, and the synergistic effects of each of these practices (Becker & Huselid, 2006).

These internal resources can provide the basis for small firms to produce superior products and services, enabling them survival and growth potential (Barney, 1991). Despite its popularity in the extant literature, RBV has also received much criticism. One important critique is that this perspective tends to operate at a very general level of abstraction, simply suggesting that people or human resources have the potential to be a source of competitive advantage and, as a result, HR systems are important (Chumphong, Srimai & Potipiroon, 2020, p. 132). Thus, this perspective merely infers that organizational performance is based on the value of talented employees as a source of competitive advantage. Capabilities are unique resources that the organization could deploy that are difficult to imitate, substitute for, have value, and are rare (Barney, 1991).

Human resources are viewed as potentially fitting the VRIN typology, as they allow organizations to gain profitability that helps to build a sustainable competitive advantage (Chadwick & Dabu, 2009). The results of the study of more than 29,000 SMEs found that RBV is the process that has been implemented between strategy and operations, which can automatically enhance organizational performance effectively (Crook, Ketchen, Combs, & Todd, 2008). Furthermore, the study of Wernerfelt (1984) concurred that in order to be a leader, creating strategies should start with the development of the organizational performance in the following areas: 1) Guidelines for using resources to create products that make the difference appropriately, 2) Classification of resources to be related to resource positioning, 3) Shows the

relationship balance between existing resources and the development of new resources, and 4) Acquisition of resources is comparable to buying a group of rare resources in an incomplete competitive market, making the most stable factors increase your trading and reduce the loss of products.

A company environment is always changing as well as the huge emergence of competitors. In this context, the sports industry is a quite competitive market that requires the companies to develop a lot more strategy to gain competitive advantages and survival of the firm. Based on RBV, De Witt and Meyer (2004) posit that there is no single definition of strategy as they tend to relate strategy with competitiveness, competition, clients, products, and service. Hence, the small business owners are suggested to take control over their assets and resources to implement any of the strategies. For example, regarding the sports coaching business, the sports coaches are the human resources and tangible assets of the company, thus become a value (V) for them. They are one of the strategies that should be developed as their capabilities and skills are rare (R), different from each other, and hard to be imitated (I). Despite this, the company itself needs to develop and organize the procedures and policies that will support the valuable, rare, and non-imitable resources (Costa, Costa, Angelo, & Moraes, 2018).

A study was conducted to a sample of 151 fitness club managers in Portugal on sports coaching business strategy. Vieira & Ferreira (2017) proposed the use of the blue ocean strategy to comprehend the current strategic positioning of fitness clubs regarding the quality dimensions. The results of the exploratory factorial analysis revealed that the main factors in the strategy of fitness clubs are associated with the employees' competences, facilities, core services and complementary services.

The conceptual framework of RBV theory, therefore, focuses on the relationship between strategy and resources in the organization through the conceptual framework of the so-called VRIO of Barney (1991) presented as follows (Chumphong et al., 2020, p. 133).

Figure 2.2 presents a compelling argument for the Resource-Based View (RBV) as a critical framework for achieving and sustaining competitive advantage. It underscores that while valuable and rare resources enable organizations to exploit opportunities and neutralize threats, resulting in short-term competitive advantage and improved performance, these benefits are inherently fragile. Competitors can replicate or acquire similar resources, diminishing the advantage over time. To secure Sustained

Competitive Advantage, organizations must possess resources and capabilities that are not only valuable and rare but also inimitable and non-substitutable. These qualities ensure that competitors cannot easily replicate or replace such resources, often due to unique historical conditions, causal ambiguity, or social complexity. Furthermore, this sustained advantage translates into Sustained Performance, marked by enduring success such as long-term profitability, growth, and market leadership. The Figure 2.2 also compellingly argues that only organizations that invest in VRIN resources can protect their competitive position and maintain superior performance over time, reinforcing the RBV's emphasis on strategic resource management as a cornerstone of long-term success.

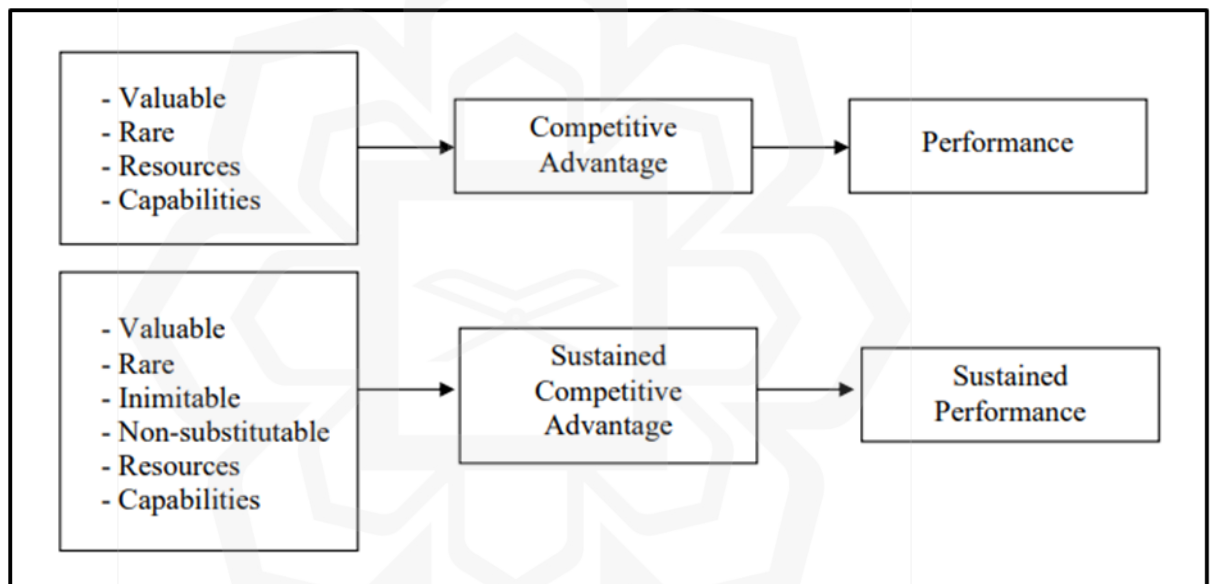


Figure 2.2: The VRIO Conceptual Framework of Barney (1991) (Source: Chumphong et al., 2020)

2.3 SUSTAINABILITY OF SMEs

Despite the critical role of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the economy, there has been limited research on their sustainability, especially in niche sectors such as the sports coaching industry. Most sustainability studies focus on large

enterprises, with fewer focusing on the specific needs of SMEs (Tsvetkova, Bengtsson & Durst, 2020). This literature highlights the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to the sustainability of SMEs, particularly those offering coaching services within Malaysia's growing sports industry. The sustainability of SMEs is an evolving concept, encompassing the balanced achievement of financial, human, and material resources, while also considering the socio-economic environment in which the business operates (Burlea-Schiopoiu & Mihai, 2019).

The sustainability of SMEs, including those in the sports coaching industry, involves a long-term commitment to profitability, customer satisfaction, employee retention, and adapting to market trends. Traditionally, sustainability has been equated with long-term financial success, but contemporary definitions include both **financial and non-financial performance indicators** (Stubbs, 2017). For example, non-financial aspects such as **brand reputation, social impact, and environmental sustainability** are becoming equally important for evaluating business sustainability (Styaningrum, Soetjipto & Wulandari, 2020).

In Malaysia, SMEs play a vital role in the economy, accounting for **97.4% of all business establishments** and contributing **38.3% to the GDP** as of 2022 (DOSM, 2023). However, despite their contribution, the **failure rate** of SMEs is notably high, with more than **50% of SMEs closing within the first five years** of operation (Resiss, 2006; Ahmad & Seet, 2009; Abdul Razak, Abdullah & Ersoy, 2018). This statistic underscores the challenges these businesses face in becoming sustainable, with financial constraints being one of the most significant hurdles (Burlea-Schiopoiu & Mihai, 2019). As such, exploring the factors that influence sustainability in the context of sports coaching SMEs in Malaysia is crucial.

Sustainability in the context of SMEs can be measured through both **financial and non-financial performance indicators** (Ahmad et al., 2020). Financial indicators often include profitability, revenue growth, and cost management. However, non-financial indicators such as **employee retention, customer loyalty, and brand equity** are increasingly recognized as critical for long-term sustainability (Venanzi & Fidanza, 2019). **Resource management**, given the limited availability of financial, human, and physical resources in SMEs, is crucial to maintaining business operations and long-term growth (Burlea-Schiopoiu & Mihai, 2019).

For sports coaching businesses in Malaysia, these factors are compounded by the **seasonality of demand** and the **need for highly skilled coaches**. Therefore, a balance between **client satisfaction**, **service quality**, and **effective financial management** is vital for their success.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of sustainability in SMEs, there remains an empirical gap in understanding how specific factors affect the long-term survival of sports coaching SMEs in Malaysia. Previous research primarily focuses on broader SME sectors such as manufacturing and retail, offering limited insight into the dynamics of service-oriented businesses like sports coaching (Nejati, Amran & Ahmad, 2014). The **lack of empirical evidence** on the specific challenges faced by sports coaching SMEs in Malaysia is a significant gap that this study seeks to address.

Additionally, there is a **practical gap** in the availability of tailored support for sports coaching businesses in Malaysia. Many entrepreneurs lack resources to effectively manage and sustain their businesses, especially in a highly competitive and changing market. The **government support systems** for such niche SMEs are underdeveloped, and there is little research on how policies could be tailored to help sports coaching SMEs thrive in the long run.

Furthermore, the **theoretical gap** lies in the fact that existing frameworks for SME sustainability often fail to account for industry-specific challenges. Most sustainability models are generic, not addressing the unique characteristics of the sports coaching industry, such as the **highly seasonal nature of demand**, **dependence on skilled personnel**, and **market volatility**. This gap needs to be addressed through the development of tailored models for sustainability in the sports coaching industry in Malaysia.

The study focuses on identifying the **determinant factors** that influence the sustainability of sports coaching SMEs in Malaysia. The research will examine two primary categories of sustainability indicators: **financial performance** (profitability, revenue generation, cost control) and **non-financial performance** (client satisfaction, employee retention, brand reputation, and community engagement). These factors will provide a comprehensive view of what contributes to the long-term success of sports coaching SMEs.

In the sports coaching industry, profitability remains a significant indicator of sustainability, but it should not be viewed in isolation. **Social impact, environmental responsibility, and long-term value creation** are integral to achieving sustainability in contemporary business environments (Szczepańska-Woszczyzna & Kurowska-Pys, 2016). By focusing on both financial and non-financial sustainability, this study will provide a more holistic understanding of how sports coaching SMEs can achieve long-term success.

The sports coaching industry in Malaysia is dynamic and offers significant opportunities for growth, driven by increasing interest in fitness, sports, and well-being. The **sports services market in Malaysia** was valued at over **RM 5 billion** in 2022 (Euromonitor International, 2022). This figure highlights the importance of sports coaching as a significant contributor to the economy, providing not only economic value but also enhancing the health and well-being of the population. In a sector that is continuously evolving and receiving increasing investments, the need for sports coaching SMEs to remain sustainable is critical.

Globally, the sports market is substantial, with the U.S. sports industry alone valued at approximately **\$400 billion** (Plunkett, 2009, as cited in Ciletti & Chadwick, 2012). Malaysia's sports coaching SMEs are positioned within this growing global market, with the potential for expansion and innovation. However, as the industry becomes more competitive, small businesses in this sector must find ways to differentiate themselves and sustain their operations in the long term.

Thus, this research hypothesised that:

H1: The sports coaching business is sustainable in Malaysia.

2.4 DETERMINANT FACTORS OF SME SUSTAINABILITY

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are a cornerstone of global economies, playing a significant role in driving innovation, employment, and economic growth. In Malaysia, SMEs contribute significantly to the nation's economy, with **SMEs accounting for 97.4% of all business establishments** and contributing **38.3% to the GDP** as of 2022 (DOSM, 2023). However, SMEs face numerous challenges that

hinder their ability to sustain and grow over the long term. Among these, access to capital, a lack of skilled human resources, and technological gaps are major factors limiting their sustainability (Styaningrum et al., 2020). These issues, combined with external pressures such as economic fluctuations and changing regulatory environments, highlight the complexity of sustaining SMEs.

Abdul Razak et al. (2018) highlight that Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are often confronted with a wide array of challenges, both internally and externally. These challenges include factors such as economic fluctuations, high costs of insurance, taxes, health and safety regulations, and the widening gap in employee skills. SMEs, due to their relatively smaller size and limited resources, are particularly vulnerable to these challenges. Unlike larger corporations, they often lack the capacity to absorb the financial burden of increased operational costs, and the lack of specialized expertise within the workforce can hinder their ability to adapt to evolving market demands or comply with complex regulations.

In comparison, **Multinational Corporations (MNCs)**, which operate on a much larger scale, have several inherent advantages that allow them to navigate these challenges more effectively (Abdul Razak et al., 2018; Styaningrum et al., 2020). First, MNCs have significantly more financial resources at their disposal, which provides them with a cushion to absorb economic shocks, invest in comprehensive insurance policies, and mitigate financial risks more comfortably. For example, MNCs can afford to manage large-scale compliance with health, safety, and environmental regulations, even in multiple jurisdictions, without facing the same strain as SMEs. In contrast, SMEs may struggle with the administrative and financial costs of adhering to these regulations, especially in markets where compliance is complex and expensive.

Moreover, MNCs often have a **diversified portfolio** of business operations spread across different regions, which helps them weather the impact of regional economic downturns (Styaningrum et al., 2020). The global presence of MNCs enables them to shift resources, adjust supply chains, or leverage stronger performing markets to mitigate losses in weaker regions. This global diversification helps MNCs to take advantage of **economies of scale**, reducing the cost per unit of goods or services as they expand their production capabilities. On the other hand, SMEs are often limited in their

ability to diversify, and this makes them more vulnerable to localized economic or industry-specific downturns.

Another significant area where MNCs outperform SMEs is in **human resource development**. Large corporations typically have well-established training programs, access to skilled talent pools, and the ability to invest in cutting-edge technologies for employee skill enhancement (Styaningrum et al., 2020). This allows MNCs to stay ahead in terms of technological advancements and innovation. By contrast, SMEs may face more difficulty in attracting, retaining, and training highly skilled employees due to their smaller size and limited budget. Additionally, MNCs tend to attract top talent because they can offer competitive salaries, career development opportunities, and other benefits that SMEs may struggle to match.

Management and Leadership Resources also play a key role in how MNCs are able to handle complex business challenges. MNCs have access to experienced leadership teams and sophisticated management strategies, including data-driven decision-making and crisis management capabilities, which are often lacking in SMEs (Styaningrum et al., 2020). For instance, MNCs can invest in advanced data analytics systems to predict market trends, manage inventory, or optimize operations on a global scale. SMEs, on the other hand, may rely on a smaller leadership team with fewer resources, and as a result, their ability to implement comprehensive strategies can be limited.

Lastly, **strategic partnerships and global networks** are vital advantages for MNCs. By collaborating with other large organizations, governments, or financial institutions, MNCs can secure favorable terms for financing, access to new markets, and exclusive business opportunities that SMEs often cannot. MNCs also benefit from a strong international brand presence, which can make it easier to negotiate favorable deals and reduce business risks (Styaningrum et al., 2020). Conversely, SMEs often rely on local or national markets and may find it more challenging to forge strategic alliances on the same scale.

While SMEs face significant challenges due to their size, resource constraints, and limited market presence, **MNCs** possess advantages that allow them to better navigate these challenges. Their larger financial resources, diversified operations,

global reach, strong human resources, and sophisticated management strategies provide them with greater resilience in facing economic and operational hurdles (Styaningrum et al., 2020). These differences in capabilities explain why SMEs are more vulnerable to external pressures, while MNCs, with their scale and resource base, are more adaptable and capable of sustaining long-term growth.

By comparing SMEs and MNCs, it becomes clear that MNCs are not only better equipped to manage complex challenges but are also better positioned to capitalize on opportunities in a globalized economy. The contrast highlights the importance of resources, scale, and global presence in overcoming business challenges.

2.4.1 Individual Factors

The characteristics and actions of entrepreneurs play a critical role in the sustainability of SMEs. As the leaders of their businesses, entrepreneurs' skills, motivations, and personal traits directly influence the direction and performance of the enterprise. Al-Tit, Omri, and Euch (2019) suggest that an entrepreneur's **education, experience, and motivational factors** are crucial for driving business growth. Entrepreneurs who possess a strong desire for achievement, autonomy, and innovation are more likely to overcome challenges and sustain their businesses (Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Aldrich, 1990).

The personal characteristics of entrepreneurs are linked to their decision-making processes, which directly impact business performance. **Entrepreneurs with higher educational levels and industry experience** tend to have better business strategies and are better equipped to manage crises (Yeboah, 2015). In Malaysia, however, many entrepreneurs in SMEs lack formal education or management training, which can result in poor decision-making and hinder the company's ability to grow sustainably (Moha Asri, 1993; Chee, 1986). In fact, **59.1% of full-time workers in SMEs** in Kuala Lumpur had only attended primary school and obtained a **Lower Certificate of Education (LCE)** (Moha Asri, 1993), which could limit their management capabilities and understanding of key business functions such as finance and marketing.

Entrepreneurs with higher expectations and an entrepreneurial mindset are also more likely to succeed. According to Townsend, Busenitz, and Arthurs (2010), entrepreneurs who are confident in their ability to meet challenges and have high expectations for their businesses are more likely to take the necessary risks and invest the required effort for success. However, entrepreneurs with **lower self-confidence** and **higher uncertainty** about their abilities may delay or avoid starting a business, affecting sustainability in the long run (Antoncic et al., 2002).

In the context of entrepreneurship, a strong desire for achievement, autonomy, and innovation is a driving force for overcoming challenges and sustaining businesses (Shapiro & Sokol, 1982; Aldrich, 1990). This is similarly seen in sports, where athletes and coaches with a high level of motivation and a desire for achievement perform better and remain competitive.

As example, an elite athlete like Usain Bolt, known for his drive and commitment to excellence, demonstrates how personal ambition and motivation are critical in achieving success. His desire to break world records and dominate his sport fueled his relentless training regimen, decision-making in races, and his capacity to overcome setbacks. Where in coaching, a coach with a high level of personal ambition (such as Pep Guardiola, who is known for his innovation and competitive mindset) can drive a team's success by inspiring players and creating tactical innovations, leading to sustainable success.

Just as entrepreneurs with higher education and experience in business are more equipped to handle challenges and manage crises, athletes and sports professionals with a higher level of training, education, and experience in their sport are more adept at handling pressure and making informed decisions. For example, Cristiano Ronaldo, with years of experience in top-tier clubs and international competitions, exemplifies how industry knowledge and experience help an athlete excel. His understanding of training regimes, tactics, and mental focus has allowed him to adapt and perform across different leagues and under various circumstances. Coaches who have formal training in sports science or years of practical experience (e.g., Bill Belichick, a football coach with decades of experience) are able to create effective strategies, understand player health, and manage the complexities of team dynamics—just as a well-trained entrepreneur can effectively manage an SME.

Moreover, entrepreneurial success often hinges on the ability to make sound decisions under pressure, particularly in times of crisis. In sports, athletes, coaches, and managers must also make quick decisions under pressure, which can determine success or failure in competition. During a high-pressure moment in a match, an athlete's ability to stay calm, make strategic decisions, and adapt to rapidly changing conditions is similar to a business leader navigating through a crisis. For instance, in a penalty shootout, players must remain composed and decisive, relying on their training and mental strength to deliver under pressure. In sports management, a team manager dealing with a losing streak may need to make tough decisions about changing tactics or adjusting the team dynamic. The ability to adapt quickly and manage crises effectively is critical, just as it is in entrepreneurship.

As mentioned in the statement, entrepreneurs with high self-confidence and higher expectations for their businesses tend to take more risks and are more likely to succeed (Townsend et al., 2010). Similarly, in sports, athletes and sports professionals with high self-confidence are more willing to take calculated risks, whether it's trying a new technique, making a daring move, or pushing their physical limits. An athlete like Michael Jordan exhibited immense confidence in his abilities, leading him to take bold shots in crucial moments (e.g., his famous game-winning shot in the 1998 NBA Finals). His belief in his capacity to succeed, even under intense pressure, mirrors the entrepreneurial mindset of high-risk, high-reward thinking. In team sports, such as football or rugby, a coach's ability to make bold decisions—such as substituting key players or adopting unconventional strategies—can be the difference between success and failure. A coach's confidence in their decision-making can influence the team's morale and performance.

Hence, entrepreneurs with low self-confidence or higher uncertainty about their abilities may delay or avoid starting a business (Antoncic et al., 2002). In sports, athletes or teams may hesitate to take action if they lack confidence in their skills or strategies, resulting in missed opportunities for improvement or success. An athlete experiencing performance anxiety or self-doubt might hesitate to take risks during important moments, such as hesitating to go for a goal attempt or making a critical pass. This reluctance to act under pressure can be similar to an entrepreneur who delays making key decisions due to fear of failure. For example, a new coach who lacks confidence in

their tactical knowledge might hesitate to implement innovative strategies, leading to stagnation in team performance. Similarly, entrepreneurs who doubt their abilities may delay business expansion, which can prevent long-term growth. To conclude, the individual characteristics of entrepreneurs such as motivation, experience, education, and decision-making skills are directly analogous to those of athletes, coaches, and sports professionals. In both fields, personal traits such as confidence, ambition, risk-taking, and crisis management play a significant role in achieving sustained success. Entrepreneurs who exhibit strong leadership, confidence, and industry knowledge are more likely to overcome challenges and sustain their businesses, just as athletes and coaches with these characteristics are more likely to perform well and thrive in the competitive world of sports.

2.4.2 Organisation Factors

Organizational factors, particularly human resource management, are fundamental for SME sustainability. Employees are often the backbone of SMEs, and their skills, motivation, and engagement significantly affect the company's productivity and growth. Proper **human resource management (HRM)** is crucial to ensuring that employees are well-trained, motivated, and retained (Fernando, Fitrianingrum & Richardson, 2017). When employees are dissatisfied or lack the necessary skills, it can negatively impact productivity and customer satisfaction, ultimately affecting the long-term sustainability of the business (Nieuwenhuizen, 2011).

A **skilled workforce** can reduce hiring and training costs, improve efficiency, and enhance customer satisfaction, which are all key factors for SME success (Goltz, 2012). In SMEs, where resources are often limited, human capital is even more critical to achieve competitive advantage. Effective management of employees through **training, involvement in decision-making, and clear communication** can lead to a more committed and productive workforce (Doherty & Norton, 2014).

However, SMEs often face challenges in human resource management due to financial constraints, leading to insufficient training programs or inadequate recruitment practices. SMEs that lack a **formal HR system** may struggle to attract and retain top talent, ultimately impeding their ability to sustain and grow.

2.4.3 External Factors

External factors, including economic conditions, government policies, and access to finance, also significantly influence the sustainability of SMEs. **Access to capital** remains one of the most significant barriers to SME sustainability. Many SMEs in Malaysia rely on **internal funds** or **personal loans** from friends and family in the initial stages of business development (Abdul Razak et al., 2018). According to the **SME Corporation Malaysia** (2017), **70% of SMEs** lack access to formal credit, highlighting the challenges in obtaining loans or external financing to support growth. Banks and financial institutions often view SMEs as high-risk borrowers due to **poor creditworthiness, weak financial record-keeping, and lack of collateral**, which exacerbates their difficulty in obtaining funding.

To address this, the Malaysian government has introduced various financial schemes to support SME growth, including soft loans, grants, and Shariah-compliant financing options. The **SME Bank** and government initiatives like **GIAT MARA** and the **Development Bank** provide essential funding, although many **micro-enterprises** still struggle to access these funds (Abdul Razak et al., 2018). Despite these efforts, SMEs often face difficulties in securing sufficient funding due to lack of business viability or poor financial management practices. For example, only **16% of SMEs** rely on financing from formal banking institutions (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2017), and the **lack of collateral** remains a key obstacle.

The **government policies** also have a significant impact on SMEs. Government programs, such as those coordinated by **SME Corporation Malaysia** (SME Corp), help to improve access to financing, technical expertise, and market access for SMEs. In 2017, the government allocated **RM10.46 billion** for 168 SME development programs aimed at supporting over **596,000 SMEs** across various sectors (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2017). However, **SMEs** still face challenges in accessing these resources, indicating the need for further policy improvements to better support this sector.

The Malaysian government continues to prioritize the development of SMEs through various policies and allocations. In Budget 2024, several initiatives have been introduced to support SMEs including introducing the Financing and Guarantees, an allocation of RM44 billion has been designated specifically for loans and financing

guarantees for SMEs. Between January and August 2023, RM5 billion of this allocation was utilized, indicating ongoing support for SME financing needs. (BERNAMA, 2024). Secondly, the Digitalization and Green Transition. This policy is to enhance productivity and promote sustainable practices, RM900 million has been allocated for digitalization efforts aimed at boosting SME productivity and facilitating a green transition. Thirdly, the Energy Transition, an additional RM2 billion has been allocated for the National Energy Transition Roadmap, providing SMEs with investment opportunities, especially in markets that prioritize environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria. Finally, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): □ Collaborative efforts between the Human Resources Ministry, Higher Education Ministry, and industry partners have resulted in RM6.8 billion being channeled for TVET programs. This includes RM1.6 billion for 1.7 million training slots, aiming to enhance the skills and competitiveness of the workforce, which indirectly benefits SMEs. (TheSun, 2024)

These measures reflect the government's commitment to addressing challenges faced by SMEs, such as access to financing, digital adoption, and sustainable practices. By providing substantial financial support and resources, the government aims to create a conducive environment for SMEs to thrive and contribute significantly to Malaysia's economic growth.

In addition to financial constraints, **macroeconomic factors** such as inflation, taxation policies, and political stability also play a crucial role in SME sustainability. SMEs operating in volatile environments, such as those facing frequent changes in government policies or economic downturns, are more vulnerable to business disruptions and may struggle to maintain profitability and growth.

Thus, this research hypothesised that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

2.5 QUALITY OF SERVICES

Service is defined as delivering intangible goods in which the quality of the services is regarded as the perception of value from the one who received them (Prinsloo, 2018). Customer perceptions can be considered as a reference point for them to make judgments about the service delivery. These perceptions lead to the comparison between expectations and performance; thus, it provides an indication of quality either positive or negative (Prinsloo, 2018). Parasuraman et al. (1985) also defined service quality as the gap between the customers' expectation of service and their perception of the service experience (as cited in Hasan et al., 2016, p. 130).

In a service industry, the quality of services is considered as the key element to maintain customer loyalty (Hasan et al., 2016, p. 128). By setting the customer service standards, it will help an organization to ensure that their service will reach or exceed customers' expectations. With the current competitive environment nowadays, an organization need to align their business plans strategically to meet the customers' needs to survive and remain profitable in a long run. Therefore, delivering quality service to customers is a must for success, and survival in today's competitive environment.

There is a need for small businesses to differentiate themselves in some manner, and gain a particular competitive advantage to attract, and retain customers through the tough economic climate (Prinsloo, 2018). One of the ways is by pursuing high service-quality levels to satisfy customer needs in such a way they will stay loyal to the same organization. Consider that larger businesses have the advantage of greater resources, a small business must find a way to differentiate itself in some way to compete and thrive (Prinsloo, 2018). Differentiation is especially suitable for small businesses due to their flexible nature and size (Taneja, Pryor & Hayek, 2016).

This quality of services can be measured as an effort of an organization to understand their customers' needs and wants as well as to consider a way to satisfy the customer. SERVQUAL model has been identified as a powerful measurement of service quality (Prinsloo, 2018, p. 95). The SERVQUAL model has been identified as an excellent management and measurement model of the customer service offering. It identifies where the gaps are in the service offering and indicates service performance thus showing where corrective measures can be implemented (Prinsloo, 2018). The

SERVQUAL model has been applied in studies related to sports coaching to assess service quality and its impact on athlete satisfaction and performance. For instance, a study published in *The Sport Journal* reviewed service quality in corporate and recreational sport/fitness programs, highlighting the importance of service quality in sports settings (The Sport Journal, 1998). Additionally, research has examined the effect of service quality on athlete satisfaction, emphasizing the role of coaching efficiency and team cohesion ((Günel, İ., & Duyan, M. (2020).) These studies demonstrate the relevance of the SERVQUAL model in evaluating and enhancing service quality within sports coaching environments.

Small businesses should measure their service quality to be able to detect what adjustments are needed to compete with the others. Customers are the main character of any organization; hence, knowing their satisfaction levels is important to maintain the business. From a small business's perspective, the knowledge of customers' satisfaction can help to prevent them from spending a considerable amount of money on marketing to acquire new customers (Prinsloo, 2018). Tatikonda (2013) argued that small businesses should pay attention to the importance of developing relationships with their customers if they want to survive over the long term. To develop these relationships, SMEs should seek customer satisfaction in which can be gained through serving a higher quality of services. Customer satisfaction leads to higher profits due to customer loyalty (Fourie, 2015, p. 181). Without any doubt, service quality is one of the important components in any business-related activity, as it can act as a weapon to survive especially in a highly competitive sector (Hasan et al., 2016, p. 130).

Studies in the fitness sector have specific attributes and scales aimed at measuring the service quality and customer satisfaction of this branch of services (Andre, 2018, p. 179). However, it has been up to each researcher or practitioner to verify among the studies of greater relevance, the main attributes and dimensions related to the services provided by fitness centres. Table 2.1 summarizes the fitness centres quality scales and dimensions used in prior studies and a brief description of each study is presented below. Chelladurai, Scott, and Haywood-Farmer (1987) developed the SAFS scale (Scale of Attributes of Fitness Services) to measure the extent to which each attribute or dimension proposed in the theoretical model influenced consumers' choice of fitness clubs.

Table 2.1 provides a comprehensive comparative analysis of scales and dimensions used to measure service quality in sports and fitness contexts, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of this construct. It argues that service quality is not a one-dimensional concept but rather a dynamic interplay of factors, ranging from core and peripheral services, as identified in the SAFS scale by Chelladurai et al. (1987), to experiential elements like ambiance and employee reliability emphasized by QUESC. Studies like those by Triadó et al. (1999) and Chang & Chelladurai (2003) further expand this understanding by incorporating both tangible factors, such as facilities and costs, and intangible elements like interpersonal interactions and organizational commitment. Meanwhile, the SQAS scale underscores the relevance of physical infrastructure and user-centric features, such as child care, while Morales & Gálvez (2011) and Yildiz (2011) emphasize the critical role of personnel and sports-specific functionality. Importantly, Nuvalia et al. (2015) simplify service quality into perceived quality, satisfaction, and value, aligning with the evolving need for a user-oriented approach. Collectively, the table highlights the progression of research from focusing on basic service delivery to an integrated framework that emphasizes the interdependence of physical resources, staff competency, customer interaction, and overall user satisfaction. This progression underscores the necessity of tailoring service quality assessments to the unique needs of sports and fitness contexts, ensuring a comprehensive and impactful evaluation.

Table 2.1: Summary table for fitness centres quality scales and dimensions in prior studies

Research	Scale	Dimensions (Factors)
Chelladurai et al., 1987	SAFS	Primary core professional services, primary core consumer services, primary peripheral services, primary facilitating goods, secondary consumer services and facilitating goods.
Kim & Kim, 1995; Athinos et al., 2005.	QUESC	Ambiance, employee attitude, reliability, information giving, programming, personal consideration, price, exclusivity, ease of mind, convenience, stimulation, and social opportunity.
Triadó et al., 1999		Quality of facilities, human resources quality, cost, communication and importance of the social environment.
Chang & Chelladurai, 2003	SQFS	Service climate, management commitment to service quality, programmes; Interpersonal interaction, task interaction, physical environment, other customers, service failures/recovery; and perceived service quality.
Lam et al., 2005; Albayrak & Caber, 2014; Moreira & Silva, 2015.	SQAS	Staff, program, locker room, physical facilities, workout facilities, and child care.
Morales & Gálvez, 2011	CECASDEP	Sports facilities, attention to the user, sports spaces, dressing room, program of activities, teacher or monitor.
Yildiz, 2011.	SQS-FC	Personnel, physical environment, supporting services, and program.
Yildiz & Kara, 2012.	QSport-14	Staff, programme and installations.
Nuviala et al., 2015.	EPOD2	Perceived quality, satisfaction; and value of service.
Vieira & Ferreira, 2017	-	Employee competences, facilities, core services, complementary services.

Sources : Various article journals

Thus, this research hypothesised that:

H3: There is a mediating effect of quality of services on the relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

2.6 PERSONAL VALUE

Value is “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (Hofstede 2001, p. 5). Rokeach and McLellan (1972) explains that “to have a value” is to maintain an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is preferable to the alternatives. Schwartz (1992) characterizes values as (1) pertain to desirable end-states or behaviours and (2) concept and belief (3) are ordered by relative importance.

(4) guiding selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (5) transcend specific situations.

Values are related to but different from personality. A common approach to personality is trait theory, and this has been applied extensively in entrepreneurship research. Thus, entrepreneurial behaviour has been associated with having an internal locus of control, being a calculated risk-taker, and having a higher tolerance of ambiguity (Bird & Jelinek, 1989). A trait is a characteristic or typical pattern of individual behaviour, where combinations of traits are often used to distinguish personality types (Eysenck & Rachman 1965). Unlike values, traits can be inherited as well as learned. However, many traits imply the development of certain values. For instance, because of his or her sense of self-responsibility for events, a person with a strong internal locus of control might be expected to more highly value individualism. Further, traits can acquire values, such as the person who values being adventurous or being independent.

To the extent that values matter, how do they specifically relate to entrepreneurship? A small number of studies have attempted to link values, entrepreneurship, and culture, with the latter examined both at the societal and subcultural levels. At a societal level, differences in underlying value systems have been associated with varying rates of new business formation across nations (Huisman 1985; Shapero & Sokol, 1982). For example, the development of North America is attributed in part to the Protestant ethic, while the slower development in Latin America has been associated with family particularism, dislike for impersonal over personal arrangements, preference for social prestige over money, and disinclination to sacrifice personal authority to group decisions, among other values (Lipset, 2000). Mueller and Thomas (2000) were able to demonstrate that national cultures that were higher on Hofstede's dimension of individualism and lower on uncertainty avoidance tended to produce young people who are stronger on traits associated with entrepreneurship (internal locus of control and innovativeness). Alternatively, McGrath, MacMillan, and Scheinberg (1992) determined that entrepreneurs scored significantly higher on values of power distance, individualism, masculinity, and lower on uncertainty avoidance than did non-entrepreneurs and that these results held regardless of national culture.

Values are "abstract ideas, positive or negative, not tied to any specific object or situation, representing a person's beliefs about modes of conduct and ideal terminal modes (Milton, 1968). Personal values or individual values are the values to which an

individual is committed, and which influence his behaviour (Theodorson & Achilles, 1969). There may be innumerable values for an individual but a few of them significantly influence the behaviour. A personal value system is viewed as a framework that shapes and influences the general nature of an individual's behaviour (Anbalagan, 1989). Hofstede (1980) has defined values as "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others". A more elaborate definition is given by Schwartz (1992, p.2), who defined values as "desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviours, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behaviour." Thus, the values refer to how people evaluate activities or outcomes and guide to a person's intentions and actions.

Most of the early attempts in studying values have observed that values play a very important role in determining individual behaviour, decision making, and managerial success (Mc Murry, 1963; Sikula, 1971; Singer, 1975). Moreover, the similarity in value orientations (Watson & Barone, 1976; England, 1967) plays an important role in eliminating value conflicts and has significant implications for the organisations which need to integrate for high-performance work systems in the organisations. Many personal aspects will interact to determine the actions of a person in a leadership role. Perceptions, attitudes, motivations, personality, skills, knowledge, experience, confidence, and commitment are a few of the variables which are important for understanding the behaviour of people.

Also, the studies that attempted to find out the link between the general values and work values pointed that general values produce work values i.e., work values emerge from the projection of general values onto the domain of work (Ros, Schwartz & Surkiss, 1999). They are no less important for understanding the behaviour of people at work, whether they are leaders or not. However, this study highlighted what might be the crucial and underlying determinant of leaders' behaviour-values. The importance of a value system is that once internalized it becomes, consciously or subconsciously, a standard or criterion for guiding one's action. On the motivation element, researchers have taken various approaches to explain what motivates individuals to start their businesses. Some researchers believe innate personality traits are the primary motivators, while others believe external/situational factors (push-pull) are more important. Personality traits, such as the need to achieve, a tolerance for ambiguity, a desire to innovate, a propensity for risk-taking, and a preference for the locus of control, have all been shown to influence entrepreneurial activity (Collins et al., 2004; Chell,

1985; Ginsburg & Buchholtz, 1989; Johnson, 1990; Shaver & Scott, 1991; Stewart et al., 1996). In the sports business context, the relationship between general values, work values, and behavior is essential for understanding the motivations and actions of individuals working in this field. Values play a critical role in shaping the behavior of athletes, coaches, and sports entrepreneurs, as they influence decision-making, leadership styles, and overall performance.

Leaders in sports organizations or businesses such as team managers, sports entrepreneurs, or coaches often rely on their personal value systems to make decisions. For example, a coach who values teamwork and fairness may emphasize collaborative strategies and ensure equal opportunities for all team members, while a sports entrepreneur who prioritizes innovation may focus on integrating advanced technologies in their business, such as wearable fitness trackers or AI-driven coaching platforms.

Similar to other industries, motivations for starting a sports-related business may stem from both intrinsic personality traits and external situational factors. For example push factors, a former athlete facing limited career opportunities might decide to start a sports academy or fitness center. While, pull factors, an entrepreneur may see a market opportunity in the growing demand for online coaching platforms or sports apparel. Personality traits, such as risk tolerance and a desire to achieve, are particularly relevant here, as these qualities can help sports entrepreneurs navigate the challenges of competitive markets.

Athletes also exhibit behavior influenced by their values, which often reflect the culture and goals of their sports organizations. For instance, athletes driven by a need for achievement might seek personal growth by joining teams that offer high levels of competition and advanced training facilities. Similarly, their tolerance for ambiguity and risk-taking could influence their decisions to switch teams or invest in new performance-enhancing methods.

To conclude, the interplay between values and work behavior in the sports business domain can be observed through the actions of leaders, entrepreneurs, and athletes. By understanding these values, sports organizations and businesses can foster environments that align individual motivations with organizational goals, ensuring long-term growth and sustainability.

Thus, this research hypothesised that:

H4: There is a moderating effect of the business owners' personal value in sustaining SMEs sports coaching business in Malaysia.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

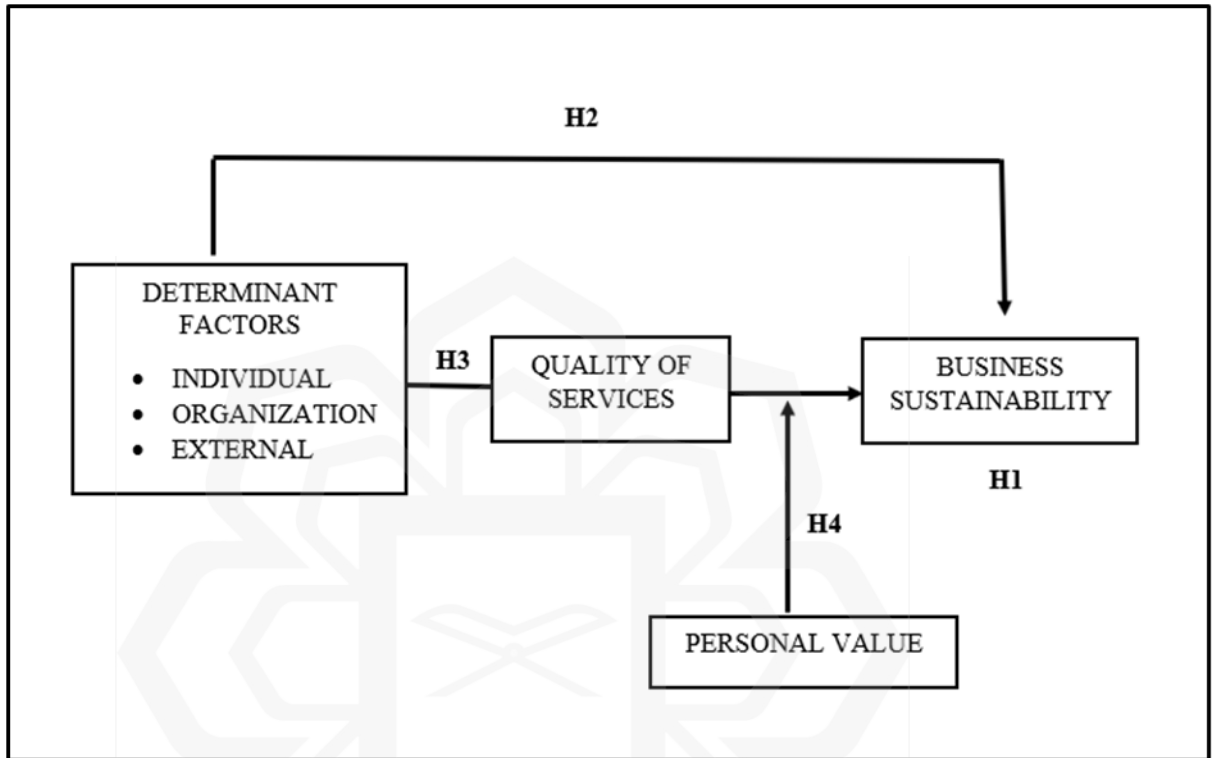


Figure 2.3: The theoretical framework of the research

The hypotheses of this research are listed as follows:

H1: The sports coaching business is sustainable in Malaysia.

H2: There is a positive relationship between the determinant factors and the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

H3: The quality of services mediates the relationship between the determinant factors and the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

H4: The business owners' personal values moderate the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the conceptual framework for the study, emphasizing the relationships among key variables that influence the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching business in Malaysia. It integrates determinant factors, quality of services, personal values, and business sustainability, with four hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H4) outlining these relationships. The determinant factors—comprising individual, organizational, and external factors—are hypothesized (H2) to have a positive relationship with the sustainability of SMEs, serving as foundational elements in the framework. The quality of services acts as a mediating variable, bridging the relationship between determinant factors and business sustainability, as proposed in H3, suggesting that the impact of determinant factors is realized through the quality of services provided by the business. Business sustainability, as the dependent variable, is the central focus of the study, with H1 positing that the sports coaching business is sustainable in Malaysia. Additionally, the framework incorporates personal values as a moderating variable, as H4 hypothesizes that the personal values of business owners influence the strength or direction of the relationship between quality of services and business sustainability. This framework provides a comprehensive structure to examine how these interconnected variables contribute to the long-term viability of SMEs, highlighting the mediating and moderating effects that enhance the understanding of sustainability in the sports coaching industry.

2.8 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on conceptual issues as they relate to business sustainability, determinant factor, quality of services, and personal value. A study on business sustainability, determinant factor, quality of services, and personal value is eventually essential in the Malaysian sports coaching business SME industry. Having set the theoretical context for the study, the next chapter provides details of the research methodology that was used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research paradigm, research design, scope of the study, measurement and instrumentation, the population, sampling procedure, data collection as well as data analysis. The methodology for the research were described in detail, in which, the rationale behind the stages starting from the conceptual framework to the findings and recommendations was also being emphasized. . The survey results obtained was analysed by using statistical analysis which was generated by SPSS following the implementation of both qualitative and quantitative approaches throughout the research

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research paradigm and philosophy are an imperative part of research methodology to collect data in an effective and appropriate manner. Various factors affect the research due to constraints such as time, budget, and data. The usage of appropriate research paradigm and philosophies helps the researcher to eliminate these factors from the research.

Figure 3.1 provides the summary of the research paradigm and tradition which was discussed in this thesis.

Ontology	Independent research
Epistemology	Theory is separated from observation to verify
Methodology	Quantitative, survey to 450 sports entrepreneurs
Method	Survey Questionnaire and Structured Interview

Figure 3.1: Summary of the researcher's paradigm

The research philosophy for this thesis was positivism philosophy. As a matter of fact, all the facts and figures associated to the research issue through general sources were collected. Statistical methods was used to assess the result. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009), the role of the researcher is very important for the study as viewed in the context of research philosophy. The author played the role of an objective analyst to assess the collected data and produced an appropriate result to achieve the research objectives.

Quantitative and qualitative methods had been selected as the main approaches for this research. It is indicated that quantitative research is a social research that uses empirical methods and statements. An empirical statement is described as what “is” the case in the “real world” rather than what “ought” to be the case. Usually, empirical statements are expressed in numerical terms. Another criterion in quantitative research is that the author applied empirical evaluations. Meanwhile, qualitative research produced detailed analysis and consist of interpretive techniques to analyse human experience in specific settings.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design can be defined as an action plan by a researcher to achieve certain objectives as well as to answer the research questions (Babbie, 2012; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). A mixed method was used in this study specifically qualitative research method and quantitative research method.

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Method

The definition of this method and its importance was explained in this study. However, defining the qualitative research method is a challenge as it does not have an obvious set of methods or practices that are merely of its own (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It involves a vast array of methods and approaches within different subjects of research; thus, the definition also varied according to different authors. For example, Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated that the qualitative research method means any findings that are not in the state of statistical and quantification. Meanwhile, Flick (2014) claimed that the qualitative research method is interested in analysing subjective meaning by

collecting non-standardised data rather than numbers and statistics. Therefore, the central meaning of using the qualitative research method was that it does not involve quantification and statistical procedures, instead, it made meaning and decode the information by interpreting. The qualitative methodology is relevant for entrepreneurship research as it enables more focus on the processes leading to entrepreneurial behaviour (Dana & Dana, 2005). This helps provide a more comprehensive understanding about the entrepreneurial phenomenon under investigation (Dana & Dumez, 2015).

Some benefits of using qualitative research approaches are as follow:

- i. The qualitative research method produced detailed descriptions and deeper insights into participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences (Denzin, 1989; Chalhoub-Deville & Deville, 2008).
- ii. The qualitative research approach consisted of interpretive techniques (interpretivism) to understand the human experience in specific settings. It could understand different people's voices, meanings, and events especially in an interview setting as it can be used to analyse the participants' behaviour as well (Rahman, 2016).
- iii. Researchers usually interact with the participants directly such as it happens during the data collection through interviews. Consequently, data collection was subjective and detailed (Rahman, 2016).
- iv. Qualitative research design (interactive approach) was constructed and reconstructed to a greater extent, thus provide freedom for the researchers to determine what is preferable for them (Maxwell, 2012; Flick, 2011).
- v. The qualitative research methods could captured the participant behaviour (Rahman, 2016).
- vi. It also provided some basis to formulate the questionnaire for data collection.

In this study, the data collection was collected through semi-structured interviews of 10 successful sports business owners in Malaysia, who would describe their experiences. The interviewee of the study was the professionals in the fields of sports coaching in different types of sports as listed in the Table 3.1. Based on the

benefit that the qualitative research method has provided as the basis to formulate a questionnaire, the data collected from the interview was used to develop a questionnaire which was then used in the quantitative research method.

Table 3.1: Number of interviewees for the study

No	Sports	Number of interviewees
1	Archery	2
2	Football	2
3	Swimming	2
4	Tennis	2
5	Badminton	2

3.3.2 Quantitative Research Method

The quantitative research method was also be used in this study after the interview had been conducted. According to Bryman (2012), unlike the qualitative method, the quantitative research method was a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data. In other words, Payne and Payne (2004) stated that quantitative methods normally separated the social world into empirical components called variables which could be presented numerically and explored through statistical techniques or systematic measurement. Thus, it focused on the aspects that could be quantified and patterned rather than interpreting their meanings. Generally, studies that used this approach extract samples from a large population, hence the results obtained could be generalized.

The following points highlight the importance of using quantitative research method in this study:

- i. As this research focuses on the perspectives of professionals who work within the selected sectors, the survey research obtained information on the characteristics, thoughts, attitudes, or previous experiences of one or more groups of people (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

- ii. Since this study aimed to find out the factors that determined the sustainability of SMEs, the cause and effect of the variables was analysed through a quantitative research method. This was because, quantitative research methods made sense of patterns in data, using measurement and exploring connections by attempting to establish cause and effect between different variables (Burnett, 2009).
- iii. Glen (2006) mentioned that the quantitative method could reduced data to quantifiable bits of facts and figures, which is later examined to create generalizations from the survey group to other individuals and situations.
- iv. Quantitative method delivers a level of valid and reliable outcomes to be applied by another future research (Creswell, 2003). It provided objective and statistically valid information based on quantified measures (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001). It was also contingent on the availability of some existing constructs to confirmation on the validity and reliability of measurements as previously examined by other researchers.
- v. A quantitative research method is systematic because it followed specified rules to assess and collect data. Further, the data analysis was less time consuming using statistical software such as SPSS (Connolly, 2007).
- vi. Quantitative research is considered as both objective and deductive, which comprised statistical analysis to develop hypotheses or theories (Odiley, 2010).
- vii. Quantitative research design developed techniques that generate data in the form of numbers, which assisted the researcher to deductively move from abstract ideas to precise numerical information that was produced by the techniques. In fact, the numerical information represented the abstract ideas in an empirical format (Neuman, 2006).

Data obtained from the qualitative research method which is done via interview was used to formulate a set of questions to which respondents will identify their answers within closely determined alternatives. A questionnaire is a common tool used in a

survey to accurately measure respondents' attitudes and behaviours. The data generated was used to provide evidence for the proposed hypotheses to draw theoretical conclusions for the hypotheses.

3.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Malaysia private sector in the sports coaching business private sector in Malaysia. A list of sports academies was identified as mentioned in Table 3.1 based on five different categories of sports in Malaysia. In the actual study, the researcher interviewed entrepreneurs who had at least five (5) years in the industry.

Table 3.1: Number of interviewees for the study

No	Sports	Number of interviewees
1	Archery	2
2	Football	2
3	Swimming	2
4	Tennis	2
5	Badminton	2

3.5 THE POPULATION

The population of this study focused on the five (5) different categories of sports in Malaysia; which are specifically Archery, Football, Swimming, Tennis, and Badminton. Since this research aimed to find out the sustainability of SMEs in the sports industry, the population was based on the total number of populations in sports academies according to the five categories. Based on the Olympic Council of Malaysia (2020), a total of 25,800 academies were registered under Malaysian's sports club which was divided based on the five categories in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: The population in this study

No	Sports	Number of Population
1	Archery	10,000
2	Football	8000
3	Swimming	1400
4	Tennis	1400
5	Badminton	5000
Total		25,800

(Source: Olympic Council of Malaysia, 2020 (www.olympic.org.my))

3.6 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Sampling procedure is a “fragment of statistical practice concerned with the selection of single subjects projected to yield some information about a population of concern, particularly for the purposes of statistical interpretation” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). Probability sampling instead of non-probability sampling was used in this study. This section discussed the unit of analysis, sampling technique, and sample size.

3.6.1 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis can be defined as the unit who fit the characteristics that we describe and using them to obtain the information we needed (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Hence, the unit of analysis in this study were the professional coaches and the owners of the enterprise. The investigation was focused on SMEs, with data were collected from the owner/manager of SMEs through a series of interviews, in which finally a set of questionnaires was developed by using the information gained. Several sample size were asked to complete the survey. The sampling frame for this research included the owners of the SMEs and the professional coaches in different fields of the sports industry in Malaysia.

3.6.2 Sampling Techniques

This study used purposive sampling, which was defined by Sekaran and Bougie (2010) as specific types of samples that conform to some criteria decided by the researcher that is needed to provide the desired information. Purposive sampling means that the

respondents have met the criteria whereby the entrepreneur must have been operating their business for about a minimum of five years. This criterion was fulfilled by checking the year of establishment of the company before the respondent was selected to be the sample. This is also parallel to the past literature that claimed a major percentage of small businesses in Malaysia failed before their fifth anniversary and could not sustain their business beyond five years. Previous studies have proven that purposive sampling is a very effective type of sampling for research with specific circumstances, and it is appropriate to get all possible cases that fit the criteria (Neuman, 2006).

This research has also used simple random sampling techniques. Based on the number of items (45) multiplied by five parameters of the Five-Point Likert Scale, a total number of 225 respondents were needed to answer the survey.

3.6.3 Sample Size

The first stage of this research methodology was to conduct a qualitative research method which is by interviewing 10 small business owners in different fields of the sports industry, as stated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Number of interviewees for the study

No	Sports	Number of interviewees
1	Archery	2
2	Football	2
3	Swimming	2
4	Tennis	2
5	Badminton	2

Then, the second stage was done by distributing a questionnaire developed from the interview sessions. This research targeted 225 respondents to answer the questionnaire.

Referring to Table 3.2, the sample size for the quantitative research method was identified based on the total number of populations correspond to the number of coaches in the respective fields of the sports industry.

Table 3.2: The population in this study

No	Sports	Number of Population
1	Archery	10,000
2	Football	8000
3	Swimming	1400
4	Tennis	1400
5	Badminton	5000
Total		25,800

(Source: Olympic Council of Malaysia, 2020 (www.olympic.org.my))

3.7 MEASUREMENT AND INSTRUMENTATION

In the first phase, an interview with 10 professionals in different fields of sports were conducted as in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Number of interviewees for the study

No	Sports	Number of interviewees
1	Archery	2
2	Football	2
3	Swimming	2
4	Tennis	2
5	Badminton	2

Four variables were used in this study. They were business sustainability, determinant factors, quality of services, and personal value. The items for the interview are explained below.

3.7.1 Business Sustainability

There are two factors of business sustainability. There are (a) years in business and (b) How do you describe your financial performance or profitability? Business sustainability can be evaluated through two primary factors that provide a clear understanding of an organization's long-term viability and operational success. The first factor is (a) years in business, which reflects the organization's ability to survive and adapt over time. Longevity in business demonstrates resilience, effective management practices, and the ability to navigate market challenges, economic fluctuations, and industry competition. A business that has operated successfully for many years is often considered more sustainable, as it has likely built a solid reputation, established loyal customer relationships, and developed robust operational strategies.

The second factor is (b) financial performance or profitability, which serves as a key indicator of the organization's economic health and its ability to generate revenue that exceeds operational costs. Financial performance is often assessed through metrics such as profit margins, return on investment, and growth in revenue over time. The description of financial performance provides insight into whether the business is achieving consistent profitability, which is essential for reinvestment, innovation, and long-term growth. Together, these two factors—years in business and financial performance—form a comprehensive measure of business sustainability, highlighting both the organization's historical resilience and its current financial stability.

3.7.2 Determinant Factors

3.7.2.1 Category Determinant Factor (Individual)

A survey form and 45 minutes interview consist of some questions stated as follow:

1. Knowledge, Affective, Psychomotor.
2. Can you describe your services? What is your BIG WHY doing this kind of business from your own personal value?
3. How much time spending on coaching sessions a week from coaches' and athletes' perspectives?

4. Knowledge formal, semi-formal, non-formal education on these activities.
5. Soft skills and technical skill management in delivering your services.

3.7.2.2 Category Determinant Factor (Organization)

A survey form and checking on the organization documentation.

1. How are you managing your company from the aspects of Marketing, Operations, and Enabler (HR, Finance, and Admin)?
2. How are you finding the right person for the right team in these three departments?
3. What is the most crucial department from these three and why?
4. What are the challenges of managing these three main departments?
5. How you overcome the biggest challenges in managing an organization?

3.7.2.3 Category Determinant Factor (External)

A survey form and checking on the demography based on database/coach report.

Political management in these activities

1. Define networking and political relationship in these activities.
2. Demographic factor or customer segmentation characteristic impact your business.
3. Strategic collaboration with other party's efficiency.
4. How the technology impacts your business execution?

3.7.2.4 Category Sustainability Factor (from business perspectives)

Strategic Planning, Financial Management, Human Capital, Market Positioning

1. What are the factors responsible for your business profitability within the first five years?
2. What planning strategies did you use during the first five years of your business operation?
3. What strategies do you implement to attract, retain, and satisfy your customers?
4. What role do start-up capital and finance from banks play in your business?
5. Describe the support services available to you when you started.
6. Explain the benefits of e-commerce for you and your customers.
7. Describe the role that any professional advisors played in your business.
8. Describe your educational background or training experience and that of your business team prior to the start of the business.
9. Explain the features of your products, services, and marketing techniques.
10. What strategies have you used to sustain your business beyond the first five years?
What else would you like to share of your experiences of becoming a successful small business owner?

3.7.3 Quality of Services

3.7.4 Personal Value

The interviews were not more than 45 minutes each. Based on the interview conducted, the data was analysed qualitatively using ATLAS.ti (v.8.4.5). This was used as a basis to formulate a questionnaire for the survey. The questionnaire used a Five Point Likert Scale, and the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

Data from the interview was collected from five different fields of sports that were identified to conduct the interview. This interview of 10 small business owners of successful companies was aimed to understand their experiences of business sustainability beyond five years. The use of semi-structured interviews helped to address lived experiences; facilitated the expression of participants' perspectives, and experiences (Turner, 2010). Data collection method consisted of digital records of each interview, participant observation notes, and interview notes. In addition, IRB approval was been gained and all protocol of ethical research was followed to protect the participants' identity (Wester, 2011). Participants were labelled as R1 to R10 to protect their identity and privacy.

Various sports small business owner (based on table 3.1) had been contacted by electronic mail, and social media to inform them of the study and gain access to their organization data. Thereafter, sports small business owner of the various sports company were invited to voluntarily participate in the study. In total, 10 participants have been responded and will be invited to participate. where all were selected and eventually completed the data collection process. A diverse sample were selected to ensure gender and age representation. Moreover, a diverse range of sports coaches with different backgrounds, sporting interests and life stories were selected to capture a wide spectrum of experiences.

The interviews would be conducted by the first respondent at a place chosen by the participants and average of a minimum of 40 minutes. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed in verbatim. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, online meeting mode and recordings were used.

A list of contacts or addresses of the academies was developed to ensure the smoothness of the data collection process. Initial contact was initiated to the respective academies. The HR managers of the selected academies were contacted, via phone or email to explain and get their permission to distribute the questionnaires to their employees. A sample questionnaire was given if only requested by the respective academies. Once approval was given, questionnaires will be sent to the academies. They were given about three weeks to complete the survey.

Obtaining survey responses from the respondents may be difficult (Cycyota & Harrison, 2006). Hence, after the questionnaire has been sent, a soft reminder through

email was sent after two weeks after the questionnaires were sent to the academies who were yet to respond. Further, after the period of three weeks is over, responses will be collected and if some of the academies do not give any responses, a soft reminder through email will be sent. However, if there are still zero responses from the respective academies, a personal call will be made to request them to respond.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The result was generated via Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0 whereas Partial Least Square (PLS) SMART PLS were used to analyse the data which includes descriptive and inferential statistics analysis. On top of that, structural equation modelling was used to test the relationship and causal processes that generated observations on multiple variables (Bentler, 1990).

3.9.1 Descriptive Statistics

Demographic factors for the current study included employees' gender, age, education level, service grade, and total service years in the public service. Different studies have used analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test to examine the impact of demographic factors on different variables including talent retention.

3.9.2 Face Validity

Face validity was used to ensure the right candidates were interviewed. Appointment with the candidate was of importance.. In the session there were 10 interviewees. The dates for the interview were 10 candidates per session.

3.9.3 Pre-test

A pre-test is to ensure the respondents are ready to be interviewed. A psychometric test will be used such as 80 questions of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence.

3.9.4 Pilot Study

Prior to the full-scale experiment, a pilot study was performed starting early of January until early of February 2020. A pilot study is a small-scale study carried out before embarking on the real study for the purpose of ensuring the validity and reliability of

the research instrument (Bryman & Bell, 2007). As such, a pilot test consisting of 30 participants were done. The respondents were selected from various sports coaching business entrepreneurs.

3.9.5 Inferential Statistics

Statistical method, the structural equation model (SEM) is employed in this study, as a confirmation for hypothesis testing approach to the analysis of several phenomena bearing structure theory. This theory represents “causal” processes that generate observations on multiple variables (Bentler, 1990).

3.9.5.1 Hypotheses Testing

There were four hypotheses in this study. According to Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2010), the researcher can estimate the strength of the relationships and access how well the data fit the model with the relationship and path diagram specified. When multiple variables were used to indicate the constructs, SEM can also provide estimated values for exogenous constructs. SEM approach is flexible in incorporating multiple causes, mediators, and moderators in one single model (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000).

3.9.5.2 Partial Least Square (PLS)

Partial Least Square (PLS) was originated by an econometrician named Herman Wold in the ‘60s and ‘70s (Chin, 1998). PLS is a family of alternating least squares algorithms, which extend principal component and canonical correlation analysis (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). Its path models are usually defined using two sets of linear equations known as the measurement model and structural model (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016). Partial Least Squares (PLS) has many advantages over regression, including the ability to robustly handle more descriptor variables than compounds, nonorthogonal descriptors, and multiple biological results, while providing more predictive accuracy and a much lower risk of chance correlation. The major limitations were a higher risk of overlooking ‘real’ correlations and sensitivity to the relative scaling of the descriptor variables.

3.9.5.3 Structural Model

The structural model was validated after the measurement model has been validated, the next step is to validate the structural model. This process was to see whether the hypotheses were supported by the data to confirm the model (Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). In PLS-SEM, a structural model was measured using path coefficients, and the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive ability of Q^2 .

3.10 SUMMARY

There were four variables to be discussed in this study: sustainability of SMEs, determinant factors of SMEs sustainability, quality of services, and personal value. This study was conducted by using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The sampling technique used were the purposive sampling and simple random sampling method. The proposed statistical analyses in this research were based on descriptive and inferential statistics.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The following is a breakdown of how this report has been organised. The early examination of data dealing with missing values, normality, outliers, multicollinearity, and common method variance tests were explained in section 4.3 after the coding schemes presented in section 4.2. On the other hand, section 4.4 and 4.5 presented the demographic of the respondents while section 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 analysed the reliability and validity of the structural and measurement models before discussing how the models fit together. The evaluation of mediation and moderation effects by including the direct, indirect and interaction relationships in the structural model respectively were described in Section 4.9. The outcomes of all the hypotheses test results were summarised at the end.

4.2 DATA CODING

In this study, data had been analysed using SPSS (version 25) and SmartPLS (version 3.2.9) statistical analytical programs. The use of SmartPLS was to examine the cause-and-effect relationship between several independent and dependent variables with small sample size (Ringle et al., 2013; Hair et al., 2014). The sample size is 30 ($n = 30$). For data analysis, coding of each construct of the measurement model and their corresponding indicator items were presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Coding of Constructs

Constructs		Code of Constructs	Code of Indicators			
Business Sustainability		BS	BS1	BS2	BS3	BS4
			BS5	BS6	BS7	BS8
			BS9	BS10	BS11	
				BS12		
			BS13	BS14	BS15	
				BS16		
			BS17	BS18	BS19	
				BS20		
			BS21	BS22	BS23	
				BS24		
			BS25			
Determinant (Individual)	Factors	IND	F1	F2	F3	F4
			F5	F6	F7	F8
			F9	F10	F11	F12
			F13			
Determinant (Organization)	Factors	ORG	F14	F15	F16	F17
			F18	F19	F20	F21
			F22	F23		
Determinant (External)	Factors	EXT	F24	F25	F26	F27
			F28	F29	F30	F31
			F32	F33		

Quality of Services	QS	QS1	QS2	QS3	QS4	QS5
Personal Value	Gender	PV				

4.3 DATA CLEANING

4.3.1 Missing Values

Missing data is one of the most prevalent difficulties in data analysis according to Hair et al. (2010). After performing descriptive statistics in SPSS, the data sets were examined for missing data. In the continuous and categorical scale replies, there were few missing data fields found which were missing at random (MAR) and therefore ignorable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

4.3.2 Normality

The skewness and kurtosis distribution methods were used to determine normality test of the data. Skewness refers to the regularity of a distribution, while Kurtosis refers to its homogeneity as compared to a normal distribution. The usual range of skewness and kurtosis, according to Hair et al. (2010) is less than ± 3 . There were two items (F12 and BS24) in the 7-point Likert type response scale which exceeded this range well above (see Table 4.2) and therefore has been removed from the data set. All other items in this investigation were within the normal range.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics: Normality Test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error

F1	30	5.80	1.031	-.786	.427	.496	.833
F2	30	6.20	1.031	-1.037	.427	-.136	.833
F3	30	6.03	.964	-.564	.427	-.755	.833
F4	30	5.47	1.889	-1.096	.427	.257	.833
F5	30	3.40	2.010	.334	.427	-1.127	.833
F6	30	4.60	2.222	-.546	.427	-1.142	.833
F7	30	5.13	2.063	-.696	.427	-.849	.833
F8	30	5.67	1.768	-1.539	.427	1.828	.833
F9	29	5.03	1.899	-.792	.434	-.410	.845
F10	29	4.93	1.771	-.592	.434	-.537	.845
F11	30	6.27	.980	-1.289	.427	.752	.833
F12	30	6.07	1.285	-2.327	.427	7.474	.833
F13	29	6.28	.841	-.967	.434	.311	.845
F14	30	5.57	1.716	-1.372	.427	1.502	.833
F15	30	5.43	1.755	-1.090	.427	.709	.833
F16	30	3.63	1.991	.267	.427	-1.293	.833
F17	30	4.97	1.474	-.216	.427	-.637	.833
F18	30	5.50	1.635	-1.395	.427	1.990	.833
F19	30	3.50	1.907	.335	.427	-.931	.833
F20	30	4.40	1.522	-.488	.427	.148	.833
F21	29	4.59	1.119	.755	.434	.403	.845

F22	30	4.27	1.660	.077	.427	-.644	.833
F23	30	4.93	1.507	-1.045	.427	1.320	.833
F24	30	3.23	2.063	.624	.427	-.988	.833
F25	30	5.90	1.539	-1.524	.427	2.141	.833
F26	30	4.33	1.988	-.131	.427	-1.139	.833
F27	30	5.43	1.654	-1.343	.427	1.646	.833
F28	30	4.70	1.643	-.381	.427	-.360	.833
F29	30	4.30	1.985	-.249	.427	-1.016	.833
F30	30	4.30	2.184	-.306	.427	-1.342	.833
F31	30	3.70	2.184	.200	.427	-1.342	.833
F32	30	5.30	1.765	-1.016	.427	.431	.833
F33	29	4.07	2.103	-.295	.434	-1.296	.845
BS1	30	5.43	1.478	-.959	.427	1.121	.833
BS2	30	5.37	1.974	-.984	.427	-.179	.833
BS3	30	5.80	1.297	-.821	.427	-.469	.833
BS4	30	4.50	1.978	-.415	.427	-.671	.833
BS5	30	5.93	1.530	-1.862	.427	3.495	.833
BS6	30	6.10	1.094	-.887	.427	-.567	.833
BS7	30	5.57	1.832	-1.573	.427	1.834	.833
BS8	30	6.33	1.028	-1.351	.427	.540	.833
BS9	30	6.20	1.157	-1.134	.427	-.289	.833

BS10	29	5.24	1.902	-.874	.434	-.217	.845
BS11	30	6.57	.728	-1.397	.427	.493	.833
BS12	30	6.60	.724	-1.542	.427	.877	.833
BS13	30	6.50	.777	-1.182	.427	-.207	.833
BS14	30	6.37	1.098	-1.812	.427	2.542	.833
BS15	30	5.53	1.833	-1.010	.427	-.060	.833
BS16	30	3.13	2.177	.633	.427	-1.017	.833
BS17	30	5.30	1.985	-.957	.427	-.033	.833
BS18	30	4.37	2.092	-.380	.427	-.845	.833
BS19	30	4.87	1.995	-.780	.427	-.377	.833
BS20	30	5.33	1.709	-.917	.427	.147	.833
BS21	30	6.30	1.088	-1.685	.427	2.262	.833
BS22	30	6.50	.820	-1.608	.427	1.905	.833
BS23	30	6.53	.819	-1.726	.427	2.233	.833
BS24	30	6.33	1.348	-2.654	.427	7.966	.833
BS25	30	6.53	.900	-1.934	.427	2.804	.833
Valid N (listwise)	26						

4.3.3 Outliers

Outliers occurs when there is an extreme value on a single item or multiple items. There is no set tolerance limit for dealing with outliers in the literature, except for certain rules of thumb that say a case is outlier if the standardized score is higher than 3.5 when the sample size, $n \leq 80$. In this study, the standardized scores (z value) of each variable were evaluated and no outliers were found (see Table 4.3).



Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics: Outlier Test

Z	N	Minimum	Maximum
Zscore: F1	30	-2.71695	1.16441
Zscore: F2	30	-2.13475	.77627
Zscore: F3	30	-2.10860	1.00245
Zscore: F4	30	-2.36473	.81177
Zscore: F5	30	-1.19384	1.79076
Zscore: F6	30	-1.62006	1.08004
Zscore: F7	30	-2.00320	.90467
Zscore: F8	30	-2.63926	.75407
Zscore: F9	29	-2.12462	1.03507
Zscore: F10	29	-2.21914	1.16797
Zscore: F11	30	-2.31230	.74810
Zscore: F13	29	-2.70687	.86128
Zscore: F14	30	-2.66167	.83541
Zscore: F15	30	-2.52547	.89246
Zscore: F16	30	-1.32257	1.69088
Zscore: F17	30	-2.01332	1.37991
Zscore: F18	30	-2.75271	.91757
Zscore: F19	30	-1.31073	1.83502
Zscore: F20	30	-2.23354	1.70800

Zscore: F21	29	-1.41805	2.15790
Zscore: F22	30	-1.96843	1.64706
Zscore: F23	30	-2.60992	1.37131
Zscore: F24	30	-1.08281	1.82624
Zscore: F25	30	-3.18359	.71468
Zscore: F26	30	-1.67633	1.34106
Zscore: F27	30	-2.67985	.94701
Zscore: F28	30	-2.25175	1.39974
Zscore: F29	30	-1.66223	1.36000
Zscore: F30	30	-1.51113	1.23638
Zscore: F31	30	-1.23638	1.51113
Zscore: F32	30	-2.43682	.96339
Zscore: F33	29	-1.45916	1.39358
Zscore: BS1	30	-2.99916	1.05985
Zscore: BS2	30	-2.21245	.82756
Zscore: BS3	30	-2.15848	.92506
Zscore: BS4	30	-1.76917	1.26369
Zscore: BS5	30	-3.22486	.69727
Zscore: BS6	30	-1.91979	.82277
Zscore: BS7	30	-2.49226	.78224
Zscore: BS8	30	-2.26904	.64830

Zscore: BS9	30	-1.90198	.69163
Zscore: BS10	29	-2.22977	.92454
Zscore: BS11	30	-2.15222	.59529
Zscore: BS12	30	-2.21003	.55251
Zscore: BS13	30	-1.93095	.64365
Zscore: BS14	30	-3.06600	.57677
Zscore: BS15	30	-2.47280	.80002
Zscore: BS16	30	-.97985	1.77598
Zscore: BS17	30	-2.16593	.85630
Zscore: BS18	30	-1.60899	1.25852
Zscore: BS19	30	-1.93779	1.06913
Zscore: BS20	30	-2.53609	.97542
Zscore: BS21	30	-3.03435	.64365
Zscore: BS22	30	-3.04875	.60975
Zscore: BS23	30	-3.09204	.56959
Zscore: BS25	30	-2.81621	.51878
Valid N (listwise)	26		

4.3.4 Multicollinearity

Collinearity occurs when there is a significant correlation between two variables (Hair et al., 2017). Multicollinearity happens when collinearity exists for more than two variables. In SPSS, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to measure it. A VIF value of five or more indicates significant collinearity, whereas a VIF value of less than

five suggests acceptable collinearity (Hair et al., 2014; 2017). The VIF values of all the constructs in this analysis were substantially below the cut-off value of five (see Table 4.4), indicating that multicollinearity of all the variables was not a problem.

4.3.5 Common Method Variance

In SPSS, the examination of common method variance (CMV) was tested. For CMV test, Harman's single factor analysis was conducted on all the variables. The results showed that (see Table 1.5) a single factor accounted for 18.465% of the total variance explained which was less than 50%, and therefore satisfactory (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014).

Table 4.4 Collinearity Statistics

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	3.111	1.713		1.817	.081		
IND	.162	.162	.195	1.005	.325	.816	1.225
ORG	.118	.157	.145	.753	.459	.827	1.209
EXT	.230	.129	.345	1.780	.087	.816	1.226
QS	.102	.816	.025	.125	.902	.783	1.278

a. Dependent Variable: BS

Table 4.5 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10.340	18.465	18.465	10.340	18.465	18.465
2	6.785	12.116	30.581			
3	5.572	9.949	40.530			
4	4.579	8.176	48.706			
5	3.448	6.158	54.863			
6	3.223	5.756	60.619			
7	2.972	5.306	65.926			
8	2.327	4.155	70.081			
9	2.242	4.004	74.085			
10	1.970	3.518	77.603			
11	1.787	3.191	80.794			
12	1.600	2.857	83.652			
13	1.516	2.707	86.359			
14	1.252	2.235	88.594			
15	1.215	2.169	90.763			
16	.955	1.706	92.469			
17	.845	1.509	93.979			

18	.711	1.269	95.248			
19	.554	.990	96.237			
20	.536	.957	97.194			
21	.470	.839	98.034			
22	.392	.699	98.733			
23	.302	.539	99.272			
24	.227	.406	99.677			
25	.181	.323	100.000			
26	3.227 E-15	5.763E -15	100.000			
27	1.413 E-15	2.523E -15	100.000			
28	1.293 E-15	2.308E -15	100.000			
29	9.848 E-16	1.759E -15	100.000			
30	7.780 E-16	1.389E -15	100.000			
31	7.307 E-16	1.305E -15	100.000			
32	5.783 E-16	1.033E -15	100.000			
33	5.056 E-16	9.029E -16	100.000			

34	4.851 E-16	8.662E -16	100.000			
35	3.427 E-16	6.120E -16	100.000			
36	3.003 E-16	5.363E -16	100.000			
37	2.361 E-16	4.216E -16	100.000			
38	1.800 E-16	3.214E -16	100.000			
39	1.435 E-16	2.563E -16	100.000			
40	7.450 E-17	1.330E -16	100.000			
41	3.339 E-17	5.963E -17	100.000			
42	- 4.142 E-17	- 7.396E -17	100.000			
43	- 8.601 E-17	- 1.536E -16	100.000			
44	- 1.387 E-16	- 2.477E -16	100.000			

45	-	-				
	1.945	3.473E	100.000			
	E-16	-16				
46	-	-				
	2.932	5.236E	100.000			
	E-16	-16				
47	-	-				
	3.137	5.602E	100.000			
	E-16	-16				
48	-	-				
	4.301	7.680E	100.000			
	E-16	-16				
49	-	-				
	4.951	8.840E	100.000			
	E-16	-16				
50	-	-				
	5.483	9.791E	100.000			
	E-16	-16				
51	-	-				
	6.687	1.194E	100.000			
	E-16	-15				
52	-	-				
	7.299	1.303E	100.000			
	E-16	-15				
53	-	-				
	8.714	1.556E	100.000			
	E-16	-15				

54	-	-			
	9.714	1.735E	100.000		
	E-16	-15			
55	-	-			
	1.207	2.156E	100.000		
	E-15	-15			
56	-	-			
	1.457	2.601E	100.000		
	E-15	-15			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

4.4 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This section represented the demographic information of the respondents including their gender, age, category of sports in which they gave coaching, state wise location of their business entity, sports coaching type, experience, program, level played as a player, duration of coaching business and duration of profit made.

Among the respondents, majority were male (90%), between 21 to 25 years of age (36.7%), member of Football Association of Malaysia (43.3%), doing business in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur state in Malaysia (40%), semi-professional coach (56.7%), having more than ten years of sports coaching experience (30%), giving football coaching program (36.7%), played as a player himself/herself in the state level (56.7%), doing coaching business for more than five years (73.3%) and making profit in sports coaching business for more than five years (66.7%). Figure 4.1 depicts the the percentages of all the demographic information.

Figure 4.1 depicts a pie chart that visualizes the distribution of sports categories based on their respective associations in Malaysia, shows the relative prominence of each sport within the national sports ecosystem. The pie chart argues for the dominant role of badminton, emphasizing its widespread popularity and central importance in Malaysian sports culture. Football and tennis, further underscore their significant following and contribution to the national sports landscape. In contrast, swimming and

archery, indicate their more niche appeal or limited representation compared to the more prominent sports. This distribution underscores the hierarchical focus within Malaysia's sports associations, where certain sports like badminton receive greater attention and resources due to their popularity and potential for success, while others play a more specialized role. By visualizing these proportions, the chart effectively highlights the disparities in focus among various sports, arguing for a nuanced understanding of how different sports are prioritized and represented in Malaysia.

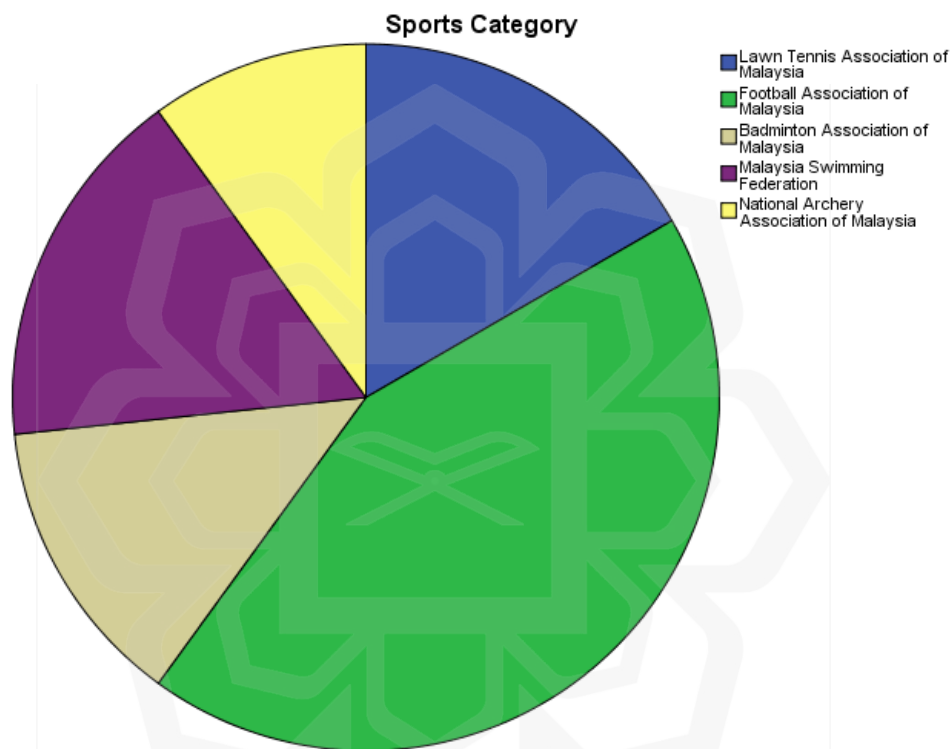


Figure 4.1 Demographic Information: Sports Category

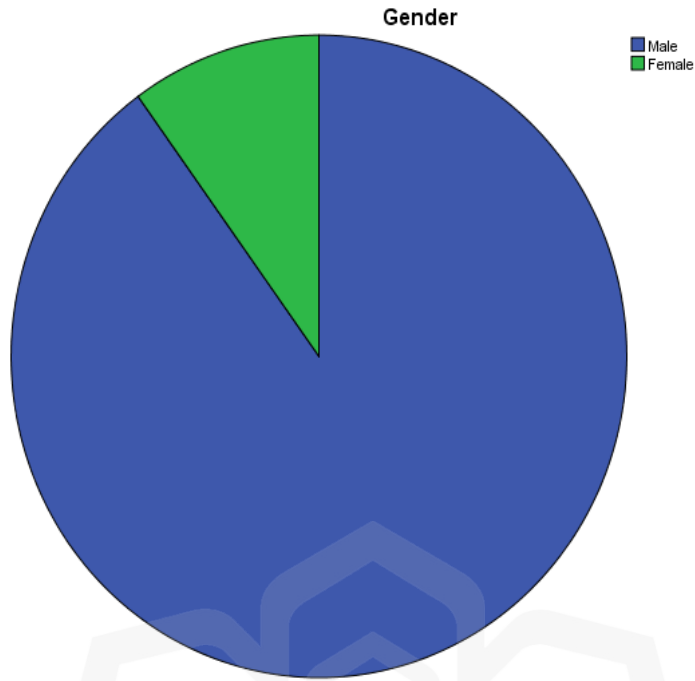


Figure 4.2 Demographic Information: Gender

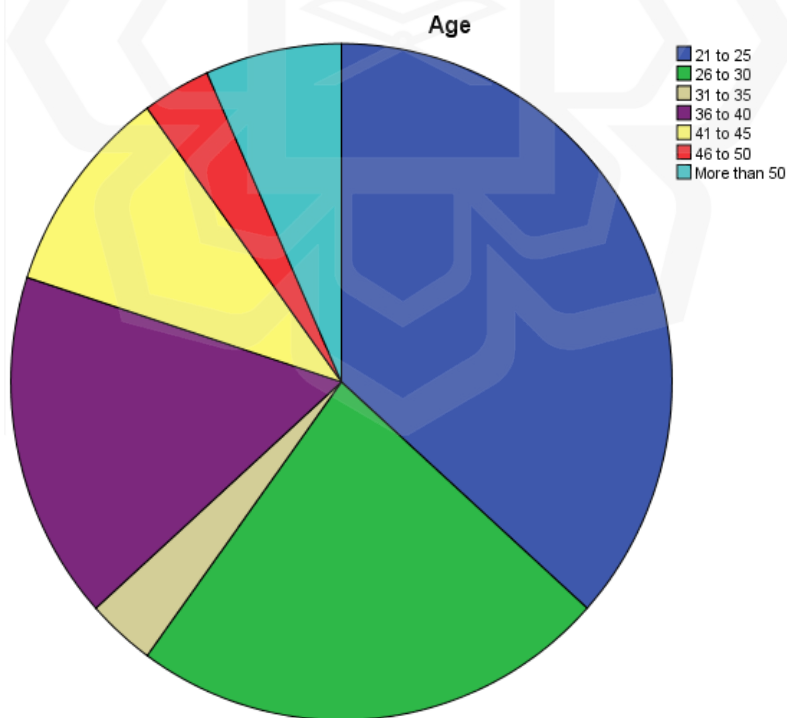


Figure 4.3 Demographic Information: Age

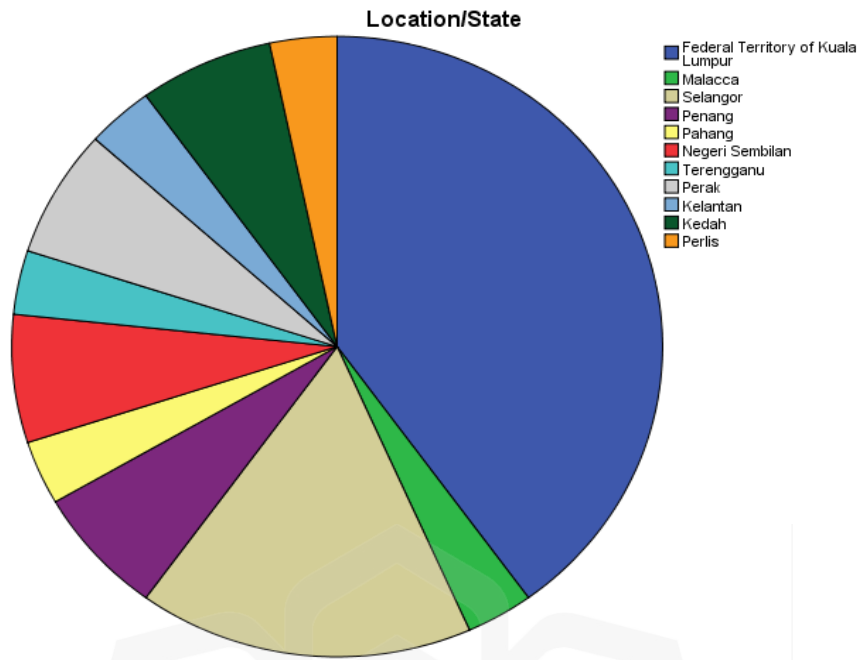


Figure 4.4 Demographic Information: Location/State

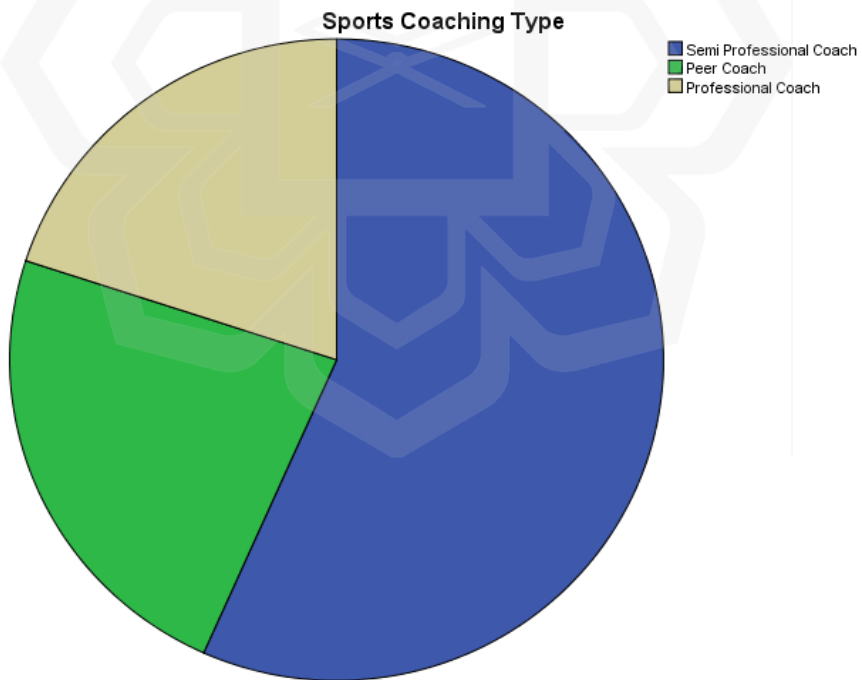


Figure 4.5 Demographic Information: Sports Coaching Type

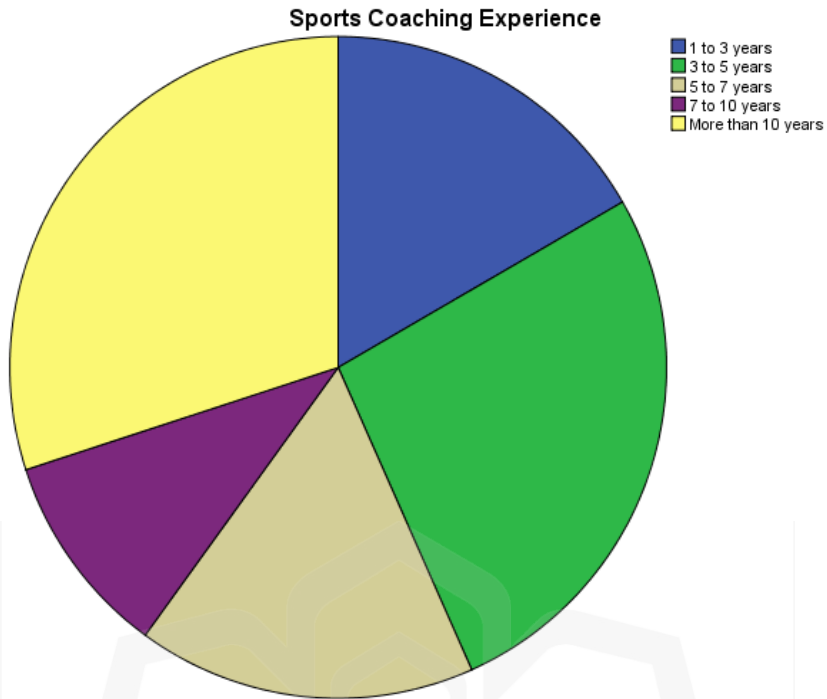


Figure 4.6 Demographic Information: Sports Coaching Experience

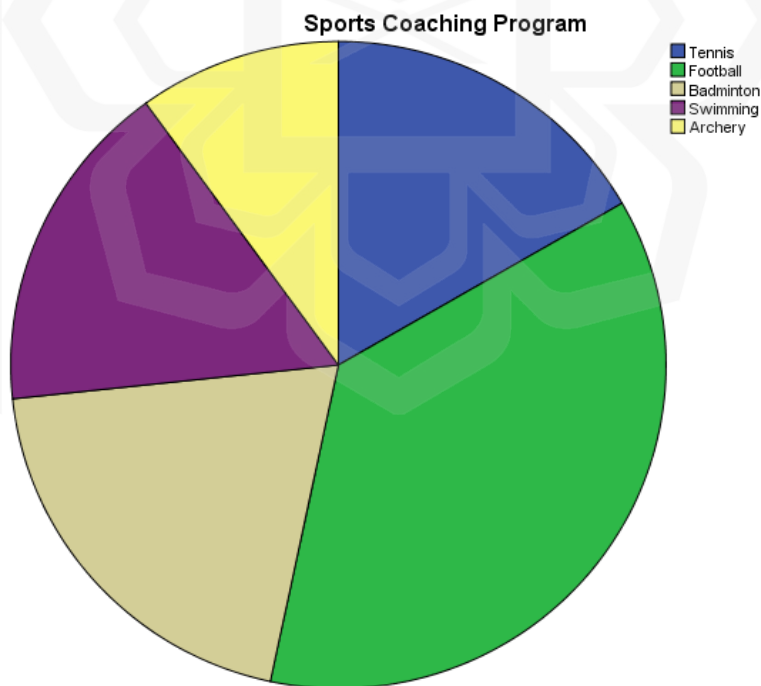


Figure 4.7 Demographic Information: Sports Coaching Program

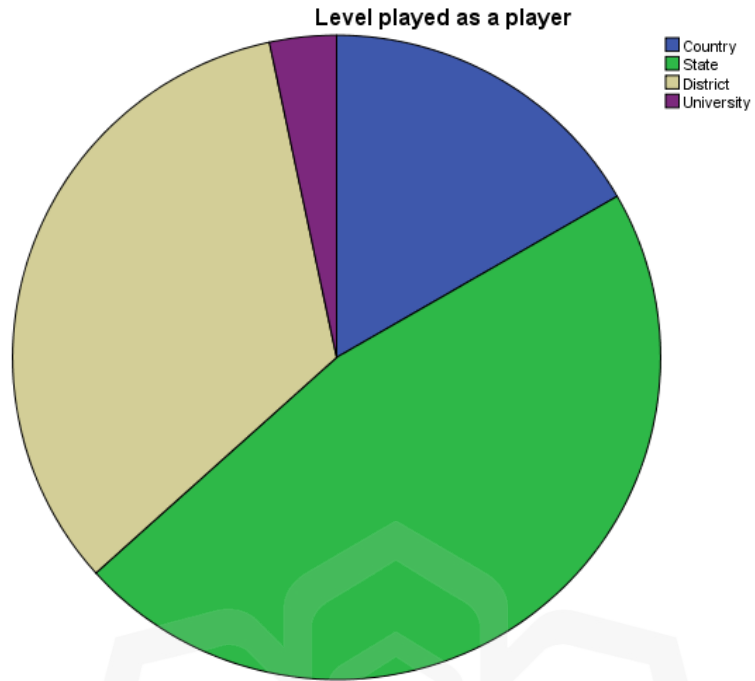


Figure 4.8 Demographic Information: Level Played as a Player

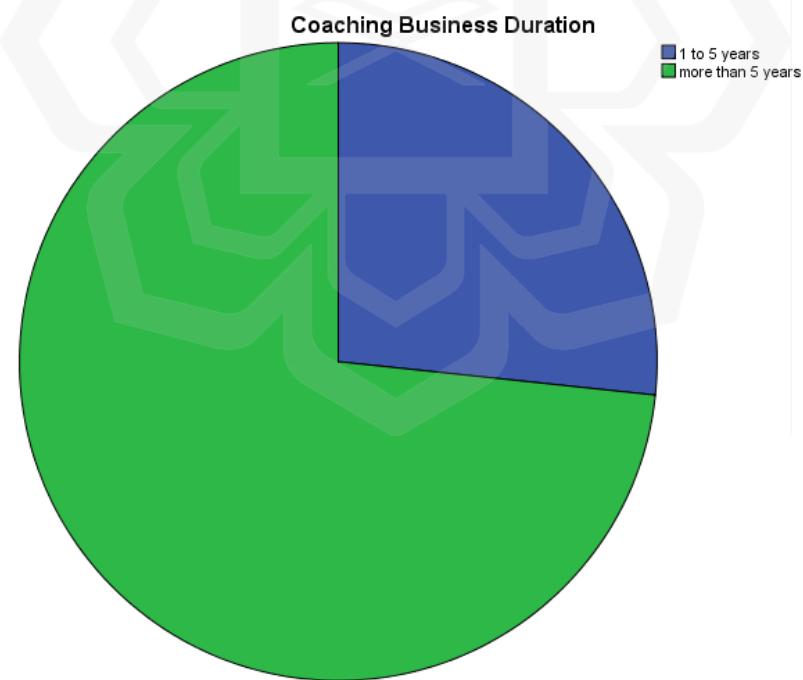


Figure 4.9 Demographic Information: Coaching Business Duration

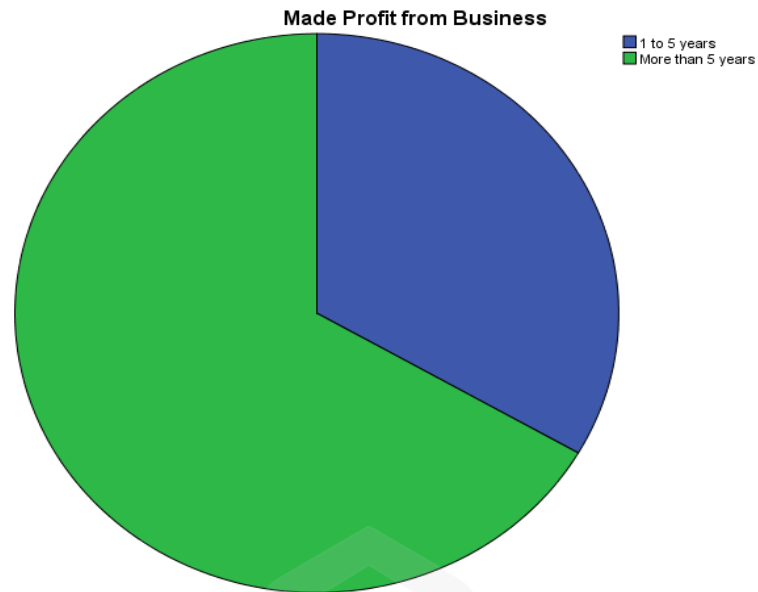


Figure 4.10 Demographic Information: Made Profit from Business

4.5 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF SCALE INFORMATION

From Table 4.6, it can be deduced that among the four main variables of this study, the mean response of Business Sustainability (BS) was greater than the other three variables. Also, there was a noticeable difference among Individual (IND), Organization (ORG) and External (EXT) determinant factors.

Table 4.6 Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
BS	30	5.7057	.64950
IND	30	5.4004	.77926
ORG	30	4.6830	.79902
EXT	30	4.5278	.97317
Valid N (listwise)	30		

4.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY TESTS OF DATA

There were three structural model weighting schemes in SmartPLS when using the PLS algorithm: centroid weighting scheme; factor weighting scheme, and route weighting scheme. The proposed route weighting strategy delivers the maximum R^2 value for endogenous latent variables and is often applicable to all sorts of PLS path model conditions and evaluations (Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). As a result, the route weighting system was utilized in this investigation, with the maximum iterations set to 1000 and the stop criteria set to 7. The factor loadings of measurement items were considered using the 0.7 and 0.5 cut-off values for item loading and item dependability, respectively (Hair et al., 2013). Item loading denoted the correlation between the items, whereas item dependability denoted the items' squared loading. Some items were eliminated at this point because they did not meet the 0.7 factor loading criteria (Hair et al., 2014). This was because, if composite reliability and AVE arose, the loading would be eliminated if it was less than 0.7. As a result, few indicator loadings smaller than 0.7 were kept in the model as CR and AVE values were unchanged. Table 4.7 represents the factor loadings of the data.

Table 4.7 Factor Loadings

	BS	IND	ORG	EXT
BS5	0.769			
BS9	0.912			
BS14	0.725			
BS22	0.739			
BS23	0.771			
F1		0.776		
F2		0.813		
F3		0.858		

F16			0.968	
F19			0.556	
F21			0.567	
F28				0.659
F30				0.829
F32				0.813
F33				0.658

Table 4.8 Reliability and Validity Tests

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BS	0.888	0.912	0.636
IND	0.751	0.857	0.666
ORG	0.644	0.688	0.560
EXT	0.729	0.831	0.554

The composite reliability reached the cut-off value of 0.6 and was between 0.688 and 0.912, as indicated in the table 4.8. As a result, the structures' composite reliability provided a good evaluation. The convergent validity was good when the AVE of each concept was estimated at 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). All constructs in this investigation met the 0.5 cut-off estimate (Table 4.8).

The discriminant validity test was a different form of validity test. It refers to the situation in which a construct's indicators were unrelated to those of another construct (Chin, 2010). Researchers have recommended using Fornell-Larcker criteria and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio to assess discriminant validity (Henseler, Hubona and Ray, 2016; Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio were assessed in this study. The square root of AVE was

greater than the relationships of interconnected constructs, as seen in Table 4.9. As a result, the discriminant validity conditions were met. When the HTMT score was less than 0.90, discriminant validity between two reflective notions were established. The HTMT matrix represented high discriminant validity in this study since all the values were far below 0.90 (Table 1.10). So, reliability and validity of the data was satisfactory.

Table 4.9 Fornell-Larcker criterion

	BS	EXT	IND	ORG
BS	0.798			
EXT	0.401	0.744		
IND	0.647	0.154	0.816	
ORG	0.300	0.266	0.179	0.678

Table 4.10 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

	BS	EXT	IND	ORG
BS				
EXT	0.435			
IND	0.770	0.293		
ORG	0.349	0.436	0.320	

4.7 LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

To find out the sustainability (years of survival and financial stability) of SMEs in the sports coaching business in Malaysia, a linear regression analysis in SPSS was performed. Table 4.11 represented the result which showed that the coaching business duration was significant in relation with the profit made over the period mentioned by

the respondents. Therefore, it can be concluded that Hypothesis (H1) is supported. H1 hypothesized that the sports coaching business is sustainable in Malaysia.

Table 4.11 Linear Regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.091	.188		.483	.633
Coaching Business Duration	.909	.105	.853	8.641	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Made Profit from Business

4.8 STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING (SEM)

The linkages between the components are defined through structural equation modelling (SEM) and evaluating the model entails examining the relationships between the constructs (Benitez-Amado, Henseler, & Castillo, 2017). The findings of the model's structural linkages are shown in Figure 4.11. SmartPLS requires that the Bootstrap method be executed to perform this test. Three thousand sub-samples were chosen for full bootstrapping in this study, using Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) as the confidence interval technique, Two Tailed as the test type, and 0.05 as the significance threshold suggested by Hair et al (2017). With a t-value more than 1.64 and a p-value less than 0.05, associations or hypotheses were supported (Hair et al., 2017). Table 4.12 reveals that all the three direct route linkages were positive in the structural model, among which IND -> BS route was significant. Therefore, based on the direct relationships between the independent and dependent components, Hypothesis H2 is supported. Hypothesis H2 hypothesised that there is a positive relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

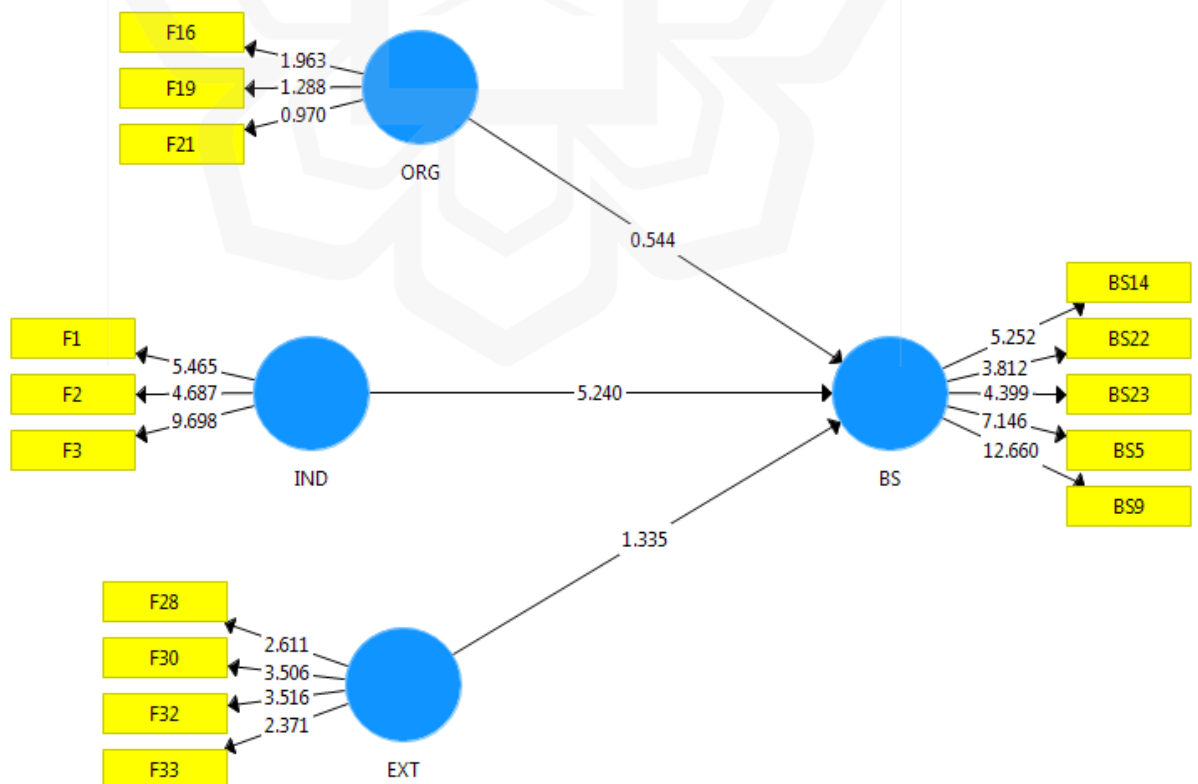


Figure 4.11 SEM (Default Model using Bootstrapping Technique)

Table 4.12 SEM Results

Paths	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EXT -> BS	0.243	0.265	0.182	1.335	0.182
IND -> BS	0.592	0.600	0.113	5.240	0.000
ORG -> BS	0.104	0.089	0.190	0.544	0.586

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicated the structural model's degree of strength (Hair et al., 2012). Different R^2 cut-off values were utilized by researchers in various fields of study. The R^2 values of 0.02, 0.13, and 0.26 are regarded as poor, medium, and strong for business studies, respectively (Cohen, 1988). Exogeneous factors like individual, organization and external determinant factors explain 50.6 percent ($R^2=0.506$) of the variation in business sustainability, according to the structural model. In PLS-SEM, many Goodness of Fit (GoF) criteria have been established. SRMR is the sole approximation model fit index proposed by Henseler, Hubona, and Ray for PLS-SEM validation among these criteria (2016). According to Hair et al. (2017), an SRMR cut-off value of less than 0.10 is considered a satisfactory model fit. In this study, the sample size was very low ($n = 30$) which resulted a not so satisfactory model fit by the fact that the SRMR was equal to 0.143 (see Table 4.13).

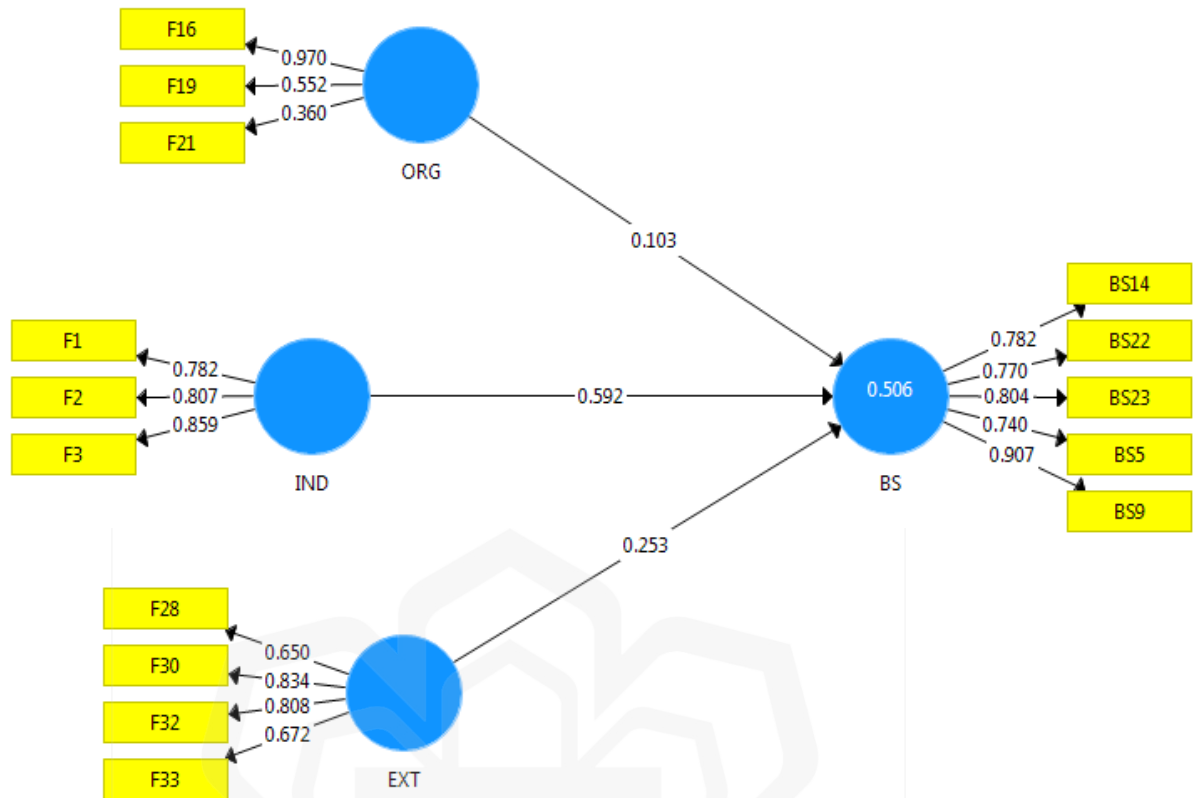


Figure 4.12 SEM (Default Model using PLS Algorithm)

Table 4.13 Model Fit (Default Model)

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.143	0.143
d_ULS	2.452	2.452
d_G	1.119	1.119
Chi-Square	155.784	155.784
NFI	0.449	0.449

4.9 MEDIATION AND MODERATION EFFECTS

When a third mediator variable intervened between two other related constructs, mediation occurs. In the PLS path model, a change in the exogenous construct led to a change in the mediator variable, which leads to a change in the endogenous construct. As a result, the nature (i.e., the underlying mechanism or process) of the link between two constructs was governed by a mediator variable. In this analysis, there was one mediation effect which was the mediating effect of QS (Quality of Services) on the relationship between determinant factors (IND, ORG and EXT) and Business Sustainability (BS). Here, QS is a dichotomous variable which had been recoded to be used as indicators of a "latent variable" and corresponded to a linear regression with multiple dummy predictors. To analyse this hypothesis (H3), a mediation model in SmartPLS was examined. Figure 4.13 represents that model. Table 4.14 represents the results of the direct and indirect paths. From the results, it was proven that all the direct and indirect paths were insignificant except IND \rightarrow BS. Therefore, there was no mediation of QS. So, H3 is not supported. (H3: There is a mediating effect of quality of services on the relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia).

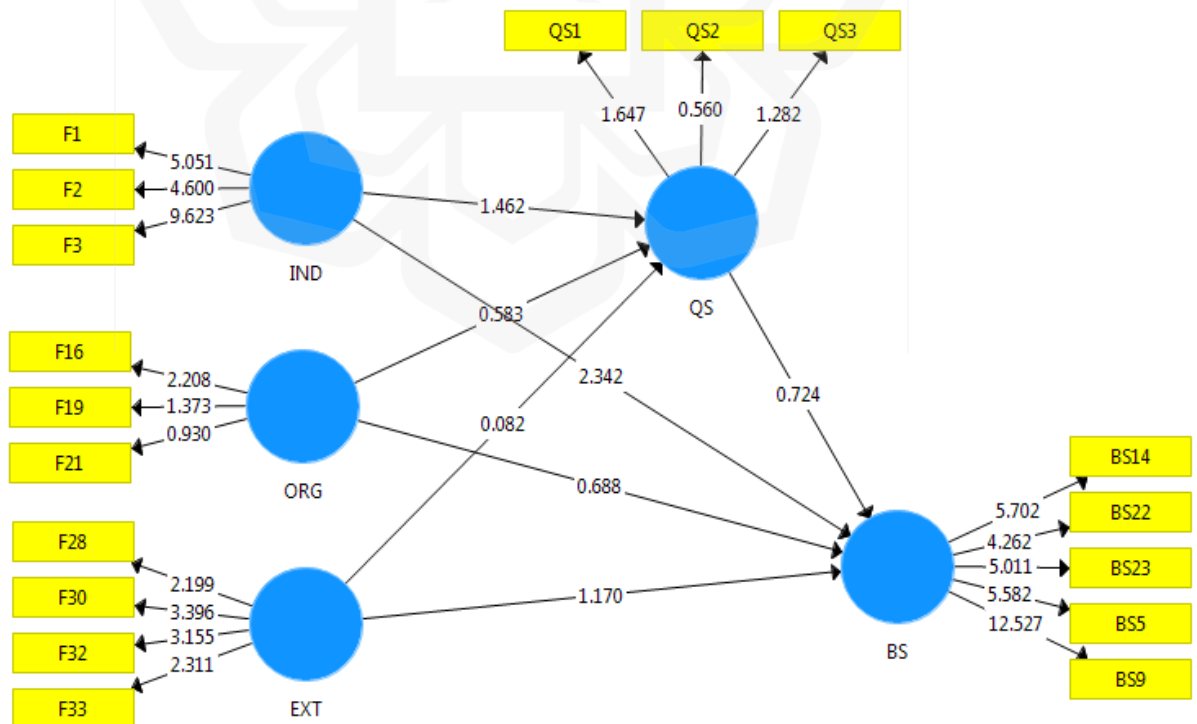


Figure 4.13 Mediation Model

Table 4.14 Mediation Model Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
EXT -> BS	0.167	0.182	0.198	0.847	0.397
EXT -> QS	-0.034	-0.011	0.272	0.126	0.900
IND -> BS	0.457	0.476	0.218	2.094	0.036
IND -> QS	0.412	0.363	0.283	1.458	0.145
ORG -> BS	0.140	0.084	0.214	0.656	0.512
ORG -> QS	-0.175	-0.070	0.316	0.556	0.578
QS -> BS	0.297	0.204	0.323	0.921	0.357

In a structural model, there are many techniques to analyse moderation effects. In this analysis, the moderation effect was Personal Value (PV) and examined using the methodologies proposed by Fassott, Henseler, and Coelho (2016). The program SmartPLS version 3 can assessed complicated pathways with moderation phrases. As a result, the basic categorical interaction term method in PLS was employed to analyse the moderation association in this analysis as PV (i.e., Gender) was a categorical variable. Moderation was implemented in SmartPLS using three distinct calculation approaches (i.e., Product Indicator, Two Stage and Orthogonalization). The Two-Stage Method was used in this investigation. In addition, the original unstandardized IV (X) and Moderator (M) construct scores were calculated. The interaction or moderation model is shown in Figure 4.14. The findings of the interaction model are shown in Table 4.15 which confirms that the moderation relationship was not significant. Therefore, H4 is not supported (H4: There is a moderating effect of the business owners' personal value in sustaining SMEs sports coaching business in Malaysia).

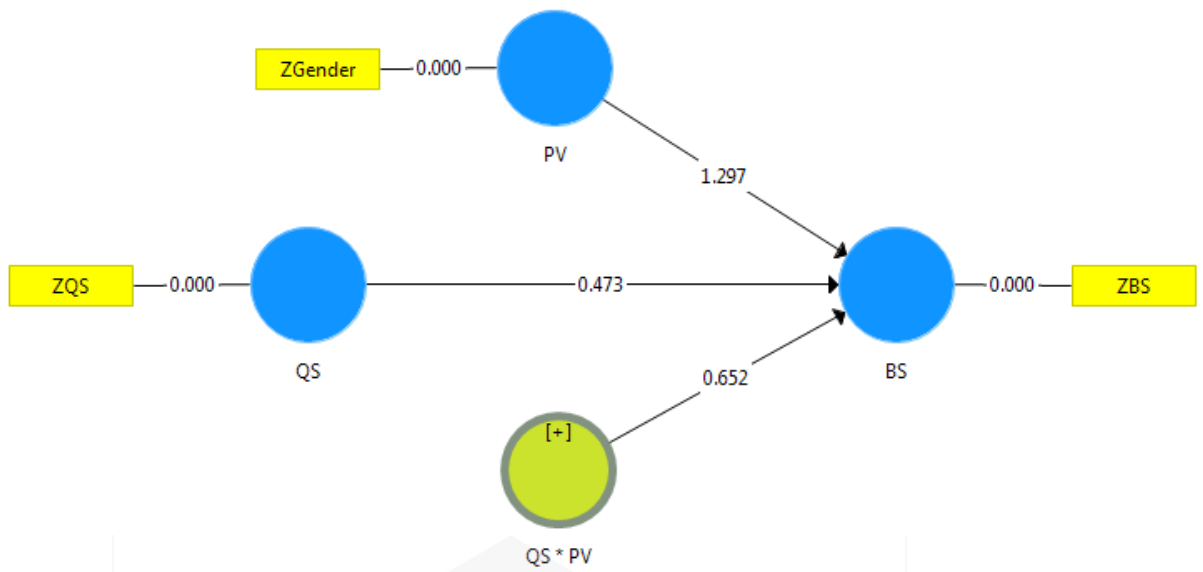


Figure 4.14 Moderation Model

Table 4.15 Moderation Model Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
PV -> BS	0.278	0.279	0.214	1.297	0.195
QS -> BS	0.091	0.088	0.192	0.473	0.636
QS * PV -> BS	0.159	0.171	0.244	0.652	0.515

Simple slope plots, which are accessible in SmartPLS, have been used to show the findings of a standard interaction study. The slope analysis is used to check the direction and degree of the interaction impact graphically (Hair et al., 2017). The slope analysis findings from the interaction model are shown in Figure 4.15.

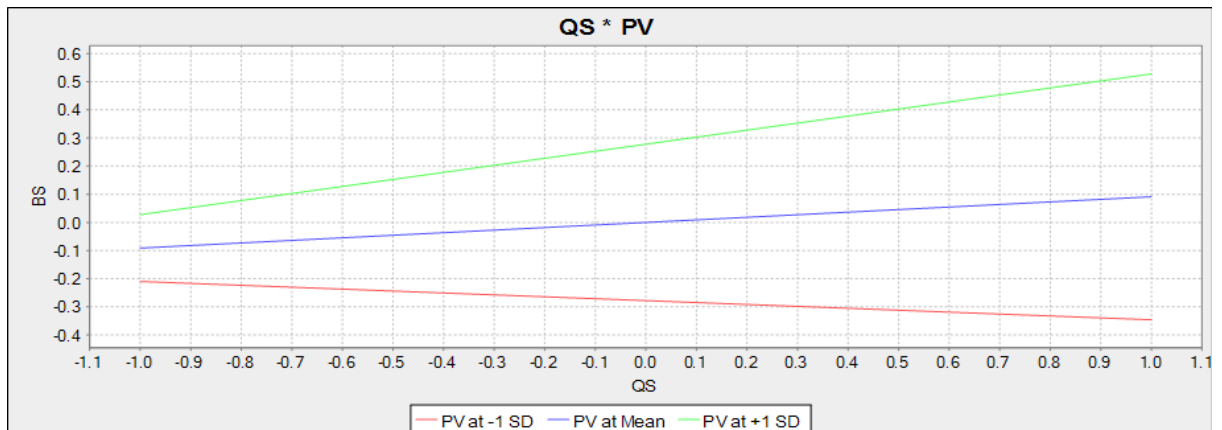


Figure 4.15 Slope analysis

4.10 SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

Table 4.16 represented the results of hypotheses testing.

Table 4.16 Summary of Hypotheses Test Results

Hypotheses	Findings
H1: The sports coaching business is sustainable in Malaysia.	Supported
H2: There is a positive relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.	Supported
H3: There is a mediating effect of quality of services on the relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.	Not Supported
H4: There is a moderating effect of the business owners' personal value in sustaining SMEs sports coaching business in Malaysia.	Not Supported

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is represented in four sections. The first section contributed to an overall summary of the study followed by the summary of the findings and their conclusions. The subsequent section is the implications of the study and finally followed by the recommendations for future research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Determinant factors (individual, organization and external) were ingrained in every sports coaching business and this study presented some insights to understand, examine, investigate and determine this industry and how the quality of services and personal value were reflected in the interactions towards the business sustainability.

The objectives of this study were to explore the detailed analysis of the determinant factors that could help small business owners in sustaining their business specifically on the sports coaching business through the four research questions as listed as follows:

- RQ1: How sustainable are the SMEs in the sports coaching business in Malaysia?
- RQ2: What are the determinant factors for the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching business in Malaysia?
- RQ3: Is there any mediating effect of quality of services on the relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs' sustainability in the sports coaching business in Malaysia?

RQ4: Are there any differences in terms of business owners' personal value in sustaining SMEs sports coaching business in Malaysia?

Research Question 1 Identified the years of survival and financial stability subscribed by five small business owners of successful companies aimed to understand their experiences of business sustainability beyond five years. The use of semi-structured interviews helped to address lived experiences; facilitated the expression of participants' perspectives, and experiences (Turner, 2010). The data collection method consisted of digital records of each interview, participant observation notes, and interview notes. In addition, IRB approval has been gained and all protocol of ethical research was followed to protect the participants' identity (Wester, 2011). Participants were labelled as R1 to R10 to protect their identity and privacy.

Research Question 2 Furnished and examined the participants' rationale of the determinant factors for the sustainability of SMEs in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia including individual (owner or manager skills, personal characteristics, gender, and motivation), organization (human resource etc.), and external (current competitive market, government policies, etc.). There was a positive relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

The researcher recommended the below key point or agenda of every meeting business either weekly or monthly within the organization which were: (i) Business Strategy including Information Technology Strategy, Financial Strategy, Human Capital Strategy, Positioning Strategy and Operational Strategy, (ii) Financial Management discussing on monthly Financial Cash Flow, Budget, OPEX & CAPEX sharing, (iii) Human Capital including recruitment, people planning and people management, leadership and HR services, (iv) Positioning related to market segmentation and expansion of the business, (v) Business operation including reporting of number of coaching hours a week/month, type of sports increasing/decreasing on sales, sports coaching location and sports based on event.

Research Question 3 Reflected the mediating effect of quality of services on the relationship between the determinant factors and SMEs' sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia. Quality of services from coaches to players or customers was important to determine their satisfaction that led to good communication and good results of the sports coaching activities. Customer satisfaction was a result of

customer loyalty. Heskett et al. (1994) stated that customers will perceive their value by the result produced by the service provider. A loyal customer or repeating customer led to the sustainability of the sports coaching business.

Finally, Research Question 4 Determined the moderating effects of the business owners' personal value in sustaining SMEs sports coaching business in Malaysia. Personal values were desirable to an individual and represented what was important to someone. Personal Value is the inner individual. It is the action of the entrepreneur who sets up "new combinations" via a new method which requires changes of the process (Schumpeter, 2002, p. 412). An entrepreneur is people who are productive to plan and organizing the opportunities into demand in a creative way (Schumpeter, 2004d, p. 254).

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of the sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the sports coaching industry in Malaysia offers valuable insights into how various determinant factors, such as individual, organizational, and external variables, interact to influence business longevity. The results derived from the 10 interview participants and 225 survey responses highlight the critical components contributing to business sustainability and the factors that influence these outcomes.

5.3.1 Key Findings and Implications

The findings revealed that **70% of the respondents** have sustained their sports coaching businesses for over five years, and **63.3%** of them have managed to generate profits. This demonstrates a relatively high level of **business resilience and profitability**, which is consistent with **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**, which emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation and personal satisfaction in achieving long-term success (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The consistent use of similar phrases and terms in communication across both **oral and written sessions** by the business owners indicates a collective approach to managing their businesses, further suggesting a shared intrinsic motivation among the entrepreneurs. The **Self-Determination Theory** posits that when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that promote success and sustainability. In this

context, the entrepreneurs' collective communication may reflect these internal motivations and the desire to create sustainable businesses.

5.3.2 Individual, Organizational, and External Determinants of Sustainability

When analyzing the determinant factors for sustainability in the sports coaching business industry, the findings aligned with previous studies, indicating a significant relationship between individual, organizational, and external factors and the overall **business sustainability**.

1. **Individual Factors (IND):** The analysis confirmed that the **individual factors (IND)** had a significant positive effect on business sustainability (BS), supporting **Hypothesis H2**. This outcome echoes the tenets of **Self-Management Competency Theory**, which emphasizes the role of an entrepreneur's self-regulation, decision-making, and management capabilities in driving business performance (Rauch & Frese, 2007). Entrepreneurs who possess high self-management skills are more likely to develop strategies that enhance the sustainability of their businesses, as seen in the effective communication and decision-making processes exhibited by the participants.
2. **Organizational Factors (ORG):** Organizational factors, including human resource management, the role of marketing, and operational management, were also identified as crucial to business sustainability. The participants emphasized the importance of **management** in the daily operations, highlighting that management's responsibilities extend across various business functions. This observation aligns with the **Resource-Based View (RBV)**, which argues that firms can achieve sustained competitive advantages through the strategic management of their internal resources (Barney, 1991). Specifically, the participants pointed to their internal resources—such as skilled coaches, marketing strategies, and effective organizational structures—as key to ensuring business continuity.
3. **External Factors (EXT):** The external environment also plays a significant role in SME sustainability. While external variables such as market demand, competition, and government regulations influence the sports coaching business, the findings indicate that **external factors (EXT)** were less influential

than individual and organizational factors in ensuring long-term business success.

5.3.3 Quality of Services and Its Mediating Effect

The study also explored the **mediating effect** of the quality of services on the relationship between the determinant factors and sustainability. The findings revealed that **quality of services** did not mediate the relationship between determinant factors and business sustainability, contrary to expectations. This outcome suggests that while high-quality services are essential for customer satisfaction, they may not be the sole determining factor in sustaining a business. This observation challenges previous studies that have emphasized service quality as a crucial driver of SME performance, indicating that other factors—such as **entrepreneurial skills, strategic management, and organizational culture**—may play a more significant role in driving sustainability (Liu et al., 2009). This aligns with **Self-Management Competency Theory**, which stresses the importance of managing one's personal capabilities and resources effectively to achieve long-term success, beyond simply delivering quality services.

5.3.4 The Role of Personal Values in Business Sustainability

Finally, the study examined the **moderating effect** of business owners' personal values on the sustainability of their sports coaching businesses. The findings suggested that while the personal values of the business owners influenced their decision-making and the language they used in communication, these values did not have a significant moderating effect on business sustainability. This supports the notion of **value-driven entrepreneurship**, where personal values guide behavior and decision-making, but it also aligns with **Pratt's (2005)** claim that values can evolve over time depending on situational factors. The participants in this study demonstrated a **self-awareness** of their values, as they consciously chose words and phrases that reflected their personal beliefs and intentions during both **oral and written communications**.

The study found that certain **values**, such as inclusivity ("we") and politeness ("I think"), were consistently expressed across participants. These values were reflective of the entrepreneurs' efforts to foster a **positive organizational culture**, which can enhance **employee engagement** and **customer relations**, indirectly supporting

sustainability. However, the moderating effect of these personal values on **business performance** remains unclear, suggesting that while values shape the organizational environment, they may not directly influence long-term business success.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the determinants of **business sustainability** in the sports coaching industry in Malaysia. The results underscore the importance of individual, organizational, and external factors in shaping business success. Additionally, the study highlights the relevance of **Self-Determination Theory**, **Self-Management Competency Theory**, and the **Resource-Based View** in understanding how entrepreneurs' motivations, competencies, and resource management practices contribute to the longevity of their businesses.

Although the **quality of services** did not mediate the relationship between the determinant factors and sustainability, and the **moderating effect of personal values** was not supported, the findings reveal that business sustainability in SMEs is multifaceted. Future research could explore the interactions between these factors more deeply, particularly considering how changing external conditions, such as market trends or policy changes, impact business outcomes. The study also suggests the need for further investigation into how business owners can leverage their **personal values** and **self-management competencies** to navigate challenges and ensure long-term sustainability in competitive markets.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the findings for the four research questions on determinant factors (individual, organization and external) are ingrained in every sports coaching business and this study presented some insights to understand, examine, investigate and determine this industry and how the quality of services and personal value were reflected in the interactions towards the business sustainability. In conclusion, a positive correlation between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia was revealed.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings in this study have contributed to the understanding that students' language reflected their value system in a blended learning environment. This study had yielded findings that indicated values subscribed by participants manifested in their language use. The findings both concurred with and provided both theoretical and practical implications for all who are in the field of communication in general, and especially for educators. The implications were as follows:

5.5.1. For those in the field of sports coaching entrepreneurship

- 5.5.1.1. For the entrepreneur in sports coaching industry to inculcate the weekly, monthly, and quarterly meeting as per the checklist below.

Table 5.1 Weekly Meeting Checklist

No	Item	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
1	<i>Business Strategy</i>				
2	<i>Financial Management</i>				
3	<i>Human Capital</i>				
4	<i>Market Positioning</i>				
5	<i>Business Operation</i>				

- 5.5.1.2. This study has shown that values manifested by people can be identified through their choice of vocabulary through their interactions with each other where intentions played a main role. Underpinned by Basic Human Value theory (Schwartz, 1992), the values emerged in the choice of words the people used. As such, these words play a vital role in expressing their intentions.

- 5.5.1.3. The study established that interactions especially spoken ones involved interpersonal communication, which required one to express

inclusion, need, and affection. These were the premise of William Schutz' (1958) on the "Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO)" while Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham's (1955) on the "JOHARI window communication". The model points out to the quality of relationship in the social interactions. They reflected the importance of context in communication to perceive one's intentions and awareness, and how forthcoming they were, which will facilitate better interaction among people in general.

5.5.2. For Sports Coach

5.5.2.1. Words used in communication reflected the speakers' values, and in view of this, sports coaches had to be cautious with their choice of vocabulary when they were communicating with their players. This was because instilling and imparting morals and values came under the purview of coaches in an educational sports coaching industry.

5.5.2.2. The use of technology in these institutes can promoted online interactions and discussions both in synchronous and asynchronous manner. This was the first step for any institution partook to promote non-physical sports coaching activities.

5.5.3. The research was done in three eras which were: Before Covid-19, during Covid-19 and post Covid-19 from the view of;

- 1) Determinant factors (Individual/Organization/External),
- 2) Quality of Services,
- 3) Business sustainability.

Below were the implications from the view of 3 eras (Table 5.3 summarizes them);

5.5.3.1 Before Covid-19

The business owners continued learning and continue growing their skills and expanding their business activities as usual. Government was open to any sports coaching program activities.

5.5.3.2 During Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic had impacted the world's population including the sports industry, with the continuous cancellations and postponements of sporting events, which greatly affected the whole sport industry (Nauright et al., 2020).

5.5.3.3 Post Covid-19

Barney (1991) examined the relationship between an organisation's internal attribute and its performance based on the Resource-Based View. During Covid-19 pandemic, the cancellation of many events, sports organizations in Malaysia had halted all sports-related activities such as events and training sessions, which subsequently, had negative impacts on the industry (Nadia., 2021).

However, a report from Digital Journal (2022) had identified that the global sports coaching platforms market size was valued at USD 272.87 million in 2021 and is expected to expand at a CAGR of 7.84% during the forecast period, reaching USD 429.28 million by 2027. This showed that sports coaching business industry in Malaysia has potential to grow bigger.

Purchasing power was undoubtedly low after Covid-19 pandemic. This also impacted consumers to pay for sports coaching programs. A report stated that food is a necessity and people needed to make daily consumption. This trend added more burden to consumers. Similar trend was also shown in the health and education categories, following more emphasis being given to the healthcare items. People were more concerned about taking extra care of themselves due to the pandemic, while expenses on education was a must, no matter how hard the pandemic hits.

Furthermore, consumer burden worsened when Malaysians also faced unemployment issues following the pandemic. Evidence showed that the unemployment rate had risen significantly, as measures taken to handle the pandemic forced many businesses to close permanently or temporarily. Other companies had to lessen their working hours and minimise the number of workers at the workplace.

These factors led to income losses and income reduction to a significant number of consumers, reducing purchasing power and financial well-being of people. Such a situation characterised the escalating consumer burden issue among Malaysians because of Covid-19 (Siti Nurhazwani Kamarudin, 2021).

Table 5.2 Summary of impact to sports coaching business before, during, and post Covid-19

No.	Item	Before Covid-19	During Covid-19	Post Covid-19
1	Determinant factors (Individual/ Organization/ External)	<p>(i) Individual</p> <p>The business owner continues learning and continue growing their skills.</p> <p>(ii) Organization</p> <p>Expanding their business activities as usual.</p> <p>(iii) External (politics / technology etc.)</p> <p>Government is open to any sports coaching program activities.</p>	<p>(i) Individual</p> <p>The business owner must find ways to adapt with the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>(ii) Organization</p> <p>Cancellation of sports coaching program and impact to job opportunity to coaches and income to organization.</p> <p>(iii) External (politics / technology etc.)</p> <p>Restriction of sports coaching business industry where no cross border, no physical contact, sports coaching</p>	<p>(i) Individual</p> <p>The business owner must creatively find ways to adapt with the current situation of purchasing power of players also affected from the Covid-19 pandemic</p> <p>(ii) Organization</p> <p>Must survive to get revenue and profit, pay remuneration and survive at minimum cost.</p> <p>(iii) External (politics / technology etc.)</p> <p>Government is allocating a certain grant for sports coaching programs up to selected sports coaching business</p>

			activities in public is prohibited due to covid-19.	owners.
2	Quality of Services	The sports coaching business entity can deliver quality services such as able to coach for one-to-one or physical sports coaching.	Adapt with online sports coaching programs due to no physical contact during Covid-19 pandemic. The coaching hours online are less such as half an hour compared to physical coaching, usually a minimum of one hour. The performance as a player is less compared to physical class	Providing quality and reliable sports coaches who can give full commitment on a weekly basis to users and players.
3	Business sustainability	Continue a good business performance towards more consistent monthly paid user.	The sports coaching business organization must reduce the price to cater for online classes.	Due to low purchasing power in Malaysia, the organization is recommended to target B40 group categories (biggest group category) to get more sustainable user and consistent paid user.

5.5.4 Implication of new learning and paradigm from the current existing theory

5.5.4.1 Determinant Factors (Individual, Organization, External)

From the Self-Management Competency theory which states “the need for achievement, a desire to be independent, self-confidence and the willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of the business” (Slocum, Jackson and Hellriegel, 2008).

Entrepreneurs set the challenging but achievable goals for themselves and for their business. As the business leader and owner of the sports coaching business, they needed to synchronize and balance the business activities as business owner, organization (managing work teams including budget team, software team and strategic action competency), and external (politic, technology, demographic, etc.).

5.5.4.2 Personal Value

From the Self Determination Theory, Deci and Ryan (2000) mentioned that the business owners who have sports coaching background and are intrinsically motivated were encouraged to pursue goals and engage in activities that they found inherently enjoyable, significant, or challenging. This factor influenced the business sustainability of the sports coaching company.

5.5.4.3 Business Sustainability

From the Resource-Based View, Barney (1991) examined the relationship between an organisation's internal attribute and its performance. This research gave impact and proved there was a positive correlation between the determinant factors and SMEs sustainability in the sports coaching business industry in Malaysia.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

1. Moderating Effect of Business Owners' Personal Values

The study highlights that the moderating role of personal values in sustaining SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) in the sports coaching industry is not well-supported by current findings. This suggests that personal values may not directly correlate with sustainability. Therefore, future research could focus on implementing more comprehensive personality assessments tailored to sports coaching entrepreneurs. This could include tools like the Big Five Personality Traits or entrepreneurial-specific tests to uncover deeper insights into how personality impacts business sustainability. In term of **observation**, similarities in backgrounds (e.g., former athletes or coaches) among sports entrepreneurs indicate that prior sports exposure may influence how they approach their businesses. Further studies could investigate if and how these backgrounds shape decision-making, leadership styles, and resilience in managing their businesses.

2. Lack of Participation in Online Survey Sessions

The study notes a higher emergence of valuable insights during face-to-face sessions compared to online surveys, where engagement was minimal. This suggests that the medium of data collection significantly impacts the quality and depth of responses. For **future studies**, to improve participation and quality in online surveys, researchers could employ interactive platforms, incentivize engagement, or moderate the sessions actively to encourage discussion. Involving active sports coaches in these studies might reveal more dynamic interactions and surface additional insights into the industry. Some things can be **consider including** the reliance on traditional methods (e.g., face-to-face interviews) may limit the scalability of data collection. Future studies could explore hybrid methods combining online tools with in-person discussions for a balanced approach.

5.6.1 Overall Summary:

- **Economic Contribution:**

The study concludes that the sports coaching business is sustainable in Malaysia and contributes positively to the country's GDP. This highlights its potential as a growth sector alongside industries like food & beverages and fashion.

- **Policy Implications:** Encouraging government initiatives to support the sports coaching industry is critical. Policies could include grants for sports SMEs, tax incentives, or collaborations to promote healthy lifestyle initiatives.

- **Healthy Lifestyle Initiatives:**

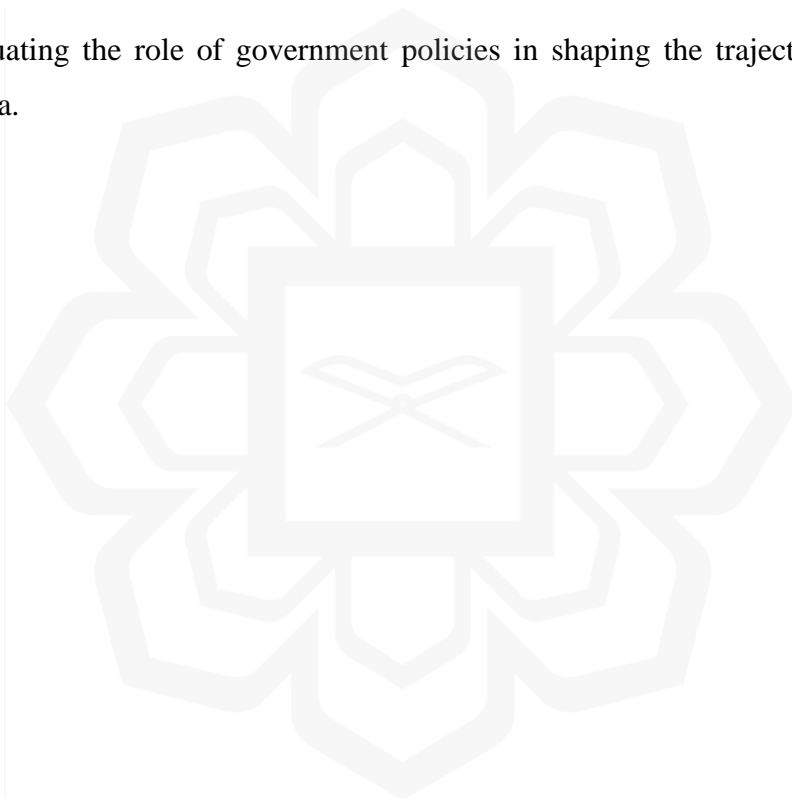
The recommendation for weekly sports coaching carnivals is a unique approach to promoting health-focused business activities while addressing public health concerns. This contrasts with fast-food bazaars that may contribute to lifestyle-related health risks like diabetes and hypertension.

- **Potential Impact:** Organizing such events could increase community engagement, provide more visibility for sports coaches, and promote sustainable businesses in the sector while fostering a healthier population.

- **Foundation for Future Studies:**

The study provides a foundation for exploring the interplay between business sustainability and values in the sports coaching industry. It opens avenues for further research on:

1. How different types of values (e.g., personal, organizational, societal) influence business success.
2. Comparative studies between the sports coaching industry and other sectors (e.g., F&B, fashion).
3. Evaluating the role of government policies in shaping the trajectory of SMEs in Malaysia.



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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

THE DETERMINANT FACTORS FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMEs) IN SPORTS COACHING BUSINESS INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA

FAKTOR-FAKTOR PENENTU BAGI KELESTARIAN PERUSAHAAN KECIL DAN SEDERHANA (PKS) DALAM INDUSTRI
PERNIAGAAN BIMBINGAN SUKAN DI MALAYSIA.

Dear Respondent,

This research project aims to explore the Determinant factors for sustainability of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in sports coaching business industry in Malaysia. Should you decide to take part in this questionnaire, you are required to complete this questionnaire that consists of twelve sections and should take no more than 15 minutes. Your confidentiality, anonymity and comfort are priorities. Your name will never be disclosed, and your responses are anonymous. Your sincere responses are highly appreciated as they will be reflected into the accuracy of the study.

Your kind cooperation and assistance in completing the form is highly appreciated.

Responden yang dihormati,

Projek penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk meneroka faktor-faktor Penentu bagi kelestarian Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana (PKS) dalam industri perniagaan kejurulatihan sukan di Malaysia. Sekiranya anda membuat keputusan untuk mengambil bahagian dalam soal selidik ini, anda dikehendaki melengkapkan soal selidik ini yang mengandungi 12 bahagian dan mengambil masa tidak lebih daripada 15 minit. Kerahsiaan dan keselesaan anda adalah keutamaan. Nama anda tidak akan didedahkan dan jawapan anda adalah tanpa nama. Maklum balas ikhlas anda amat dihargai kerana ia akan dicerminkan dalam ketepatan kajian.

Kerjasama dan bantuan anda dalam mengisi borang amat dihargai.

Thank you.

Regards,

Mohd Rashid Bin Jamiran

Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

53100 Gombak, Selangor

Mobile no: 017-267 3621

E-mail: hebohkite@gmail.com

*Required

SOALAN SARINGAN

SCREENING QUESTION

1. Malaysian Sports Association Awareness: Please select sports category under Malaysian Sports Association based on your sport. *

Kesedaran Persatuan Sukan Malaysia: Sila pilih kategori sukan di bawah Persatuan Sukan Malaysia berdasarkan sukan anda.

Mark only one oval.

- Archery - NAAM - National Archery Association of Malaysia (NAAM)
- Badminton - Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM)
- Football -Football Association of Malaysia
- Swimming - Malaysia Swimming Federation
- Tennis -Lawn Tennis Association of Malaysia (LTAM)

2. Gender *

Jantina

Mark only one oval.

- Male/Lelaki
 Female/Perempuan

3. Age (i.e., 25) * Umur (cth: 25)

4. State *

Negeri

Mark only one oval.

- Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur
 Federal Territory of Labuan
 Federal Territory of Putrajaya
 Johor
 Kedah
 Kelantan
 Malacca
 Negeri Sembilan
 Pahang
 Perak
 Perlis
 Penang
 Sabah
 Sarawak
 Selangor
 Terengganu

5. Please select below based on your sports coaching experience * Sila pilih di bawah berdasarkan pengalaman kejurulatihan sukan anda.

Tick all that apply.

Peer Coach - Experienced coaching peer level. i.e., to family members, friends / Jurulatih rakan sebaya: mengajar secara tidak formal kepada ahli keluarga dan rakan-rakan

Semi Professional Coach - coaching for tournament, state level / Jurulatih separa profesional: mempunyai sijil asas kejurulatihan

Professional Coach - coaching for National level & above for tournament preparation / Jurulatih profesional: mempunyai sijil kejurulatihan peringkat negeri/negara

6. Total number of years of experience in sports coaching experience (as coach or as players) * Jumlah bilangan tahun pengalaman dalam pengalaman kejurulatihan sukan (sebagai jurulatih atau sebagai pemain) *Mark only one oval.*

- 1-3 years
 3-5 years
 5-7 years 7-10
 years more than
 10 years

7. Please select sports experience in sport coaching program * Sila pilih pengalaman sukan dalam program kejurulatihan sukan

Tick all that apply.

- Archery
 Badminton
 Football
 Swimming
 Tennis
 Other: _____

8. Sports experience in sports coaching programme (others...) * Pengalaman sukan dalam program kejurulatihan sukan (lain-lain...)

9. Have you had experienced as players * Adakah anda berpengalaman sebagai pemain

Mark only one oval.

- Yes/Ya
 No/Tidak

10. If yes, then at what level * Jika ya, diperingkat mana

Tick all that apply.

- District/Daerah
 State/Negeri
 Country/Negara Other: _____

1. All individual responses to this questionnaire will be treated STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.
2. You are required to answer all the questions.
3. For most questions, you are required to rank your answer according to your preferences. Please choose the number to indicate your level of agreement with the given statements on a scale of 1 (Not true at all), 2 (Not true), 3 (Somewhat not true), 4 (Neutral), 5 (Somewhat true), 6 (True) and 7 (Definitely true).
4. For some questions, please tick the box(es) most applicable to you.
5. Do not tick (√) more than one answer on each statement. Your answers are very important to the accuracy of the study.
6. Do not worried or puzzled over the statements that you see in the questionnaire, just answer based on your Trust impression or the immediate feeling that you have about the statement.

General
Instructions
and
Information

ARAHAN PENTING:

1. Semua jawapan individu kepada soal selidik ini akan dilayan SULIT SULIT.
2. Anda dikehendaki menjawab semua soalan.
3. Bagi kebanyakan soalan, anda dikehendaki meletakkan kedudukan jawapan anda mengikut keutamaan anda. Sila pilih nombor untuk menunjukkan tahap persetujuan anda dengan pernyataan yang diberikan pada skala 1 (sangat tidak setuju), 2 (Tidak setuju), 3 (Agak tidak setuju), 4 (Neutral), 5 (Agak setuju), 6 (setuju) dan 7 (sangat setuju).
4. Untuk beberapa soalan, sila tandakan kotak yang paling sesuai untuk anda.
5. Jangan tandakan (√) lebih daripada satu jawapan pada setiap pernyataan. Jawapan anda sangat penting untuk ketepatan kajian.
6. Jangan risau atau hairan dengan kenyataan yang anda lihat dalam soal selidik, jawab sahaja berdasarkan tanggapan pertama anda atau perasaan serta-merta yang anda ada tentang pernyataan tersebut.

Section A: Business Sustainability

11. 1. I have been in this business for more than five years Saya telah berkecimpung dalam perniagaan ini selama lebih dari 5 tahun *Mark only one oval.*

Yes/Ya
 No/Tidak

12. 2. I have made profit from my business coaching for more than five years

Saya telah mendapat keuntungan daripada bimbingan perniagaan saya selama lebih daripada 5 tahun *Mark only one oval.*

Yes/Ya
 No/Tidak

Faktor Penentu Kategori (Individu)

Section B: Category Determinant Factor (Individual)

13. 1. I am competent and knowledgeable in my own sports coaching business. Saya cekap dan berpengetahuan dalam perniagaan kejurulatihan sukan saya sendiri *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

14. 2. I am passionate in this sports coaching business. Saya berminat dalam perniagaan kejurulatihan sukan ini *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

15. 3. I am skilful in my own sports coaching activities. Saya mahir dalam aktiviti kejurulatihan sukan saya sendiri *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

16. 4. I conduct my sports coaching 8 hours per week. Saya menjalankan latihan sukan saya 8 jam seminggu *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

17. 5. I conduct my sports coaching during weekdays only. Saya menjalankan latihan sukan saya pada hari bekerja sahaja *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

18. 6. I conduct my sports coaching during weekends only. Saya menjalankan latihan sukan saya pada hujung minggu sahaja *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

19. 7. I conduct my sports coaching during weekdays and weekends. Saya menjalankan latihan sukan saya pada hari bekerja dan hujung minggu *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

20. 8. I have attended formal education classes. Saya pernah mengikuti kelas pendidikan formal *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

21. 9. I have attended semi-formal education classes. Saya pernah mengikuti kelas pendidikan separuh formal *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

22. 10. I have attended informal education classes. Saya pernah mengikuti kelas pendidikan tidak formal *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

23. 11. I maintain a friendly relationship with my players during delivering my sports services. Saya mengekalkan hubungan mesra dengan pemain saya semasa menyampaikan perkhidmatan sukan saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

24. 12. I will find coaches who like coaching kids to deliver the sports services.

Saya akan mencari jurulatih yang suka melatih kanak-kanak untuk menyampaikan perkhidmatan sukan *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

25. 13. I will provide enough coaches and assistant coaches for each class session held.

Saya akan menyediakan bilangan jurulatih dan penolong jurulatih yang mencukupi bagi setiap sesi kelas yang diadakan.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

Seksyen C (i): Faktor Penentu Kategori (Organisasi)

Section C (i): Category Determinant Factor (Organization)

26. 1. I am more likely to avoid any involvement of politicians into my business.

Saya lebih berkemungkinan untuk mengelakkan sebarang penglibatan ahli politik dalam perniagaan saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

27. 2. I don't need the network and politician relationship in this business. Saya tidak memerlukan rangkaian dan hubungan ahli politik dalam perniagaan ini *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

28. 3. I have tried to come closer to politicians but to no avail. Saya telah cuba mendekati ahli politik tetapi tidak berjaya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

29. 4. No need to associate with politicians as I have no plan to do so.

Tidak perlu bergaul dengan ahli politik kerana saya tidak bercadang untuk berbuat demikian *Mark*

only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

30. 5. Factors that impact my business is there are no physical classes during Covid-19.

Faktor yang mempengaruhi pemiagaan saya ialah tiada kelas fizikal semasa Covid-19 *Mark*

only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

31. 6. Most of my players have quit the training session because they are exhausted.

Kebanyakan pemain saya telah berhenti dari sesi latihan kerana keletihan *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

32. 7. My customers are mostly from B40 group. Pelanggan saya kebanyakannya daripada golongan B40 *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

33. 8. My customers are mostly from M40 group. Pelanggan saya kebanyakannya daripada golongan M40 *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

34. 9. My customers are mostly from T20 group. Pelanggan saya kebanyakannya daripada golongan T20 *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

35. 10. My customers are mostly from B40 and M40 groups. Pelanggan saya kebanyakannya daripada golongan B40 dan M40 *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

Section C (ii): Category Determinant Factor (Organization)

36. 11. Some of my customers have children with disabilities (autism, etc.); Beberapa pelanggan saya mempunyai anak kurang upaya (autisme dan lain-lain) *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

37. 12. I will accept investors to invest in my sports business; Saya akan menerima pelabur untuk melabur dalam perniagaan sukan saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

38. 13. I have never got an investor Saya tidak pernah mendapat pelabur; *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

39. 14. I have mostly collaborated with schools/universities; Saya kebanyakannya bekerjasama dengan sekolah/universiti *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

40. 15. I have a lot of connection with other parties especially with Higher education institutions; Saya mempunyai banyak hubungan dengan pihak lain terutamanya dengan institusi pengajian tinggi *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

41. 16. I have collaborated with pre-school. Saya telah bekerjasama dengan prasekolah *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

42. 17. I have used an app to store student scores. Saya telah menggunakan aplikasi untuk menyimpan markah pelajar *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

43. 18. I have never used any technology tools so far. Saya tidak pernah menggunakan sebarang alat teknologi setakat ini *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

44. 19. I make full use of technology facilities to help my business.

Saya menggunakan sepenuhnya kemudahan teknologi untuk membantu perniagaan saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

45. 20. My payment method to collect fees is through auto debit. Kaedah pembayaran saya untuk mengutip yuran adalah melalui auto debit *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

Section D (i): Category Sustainability Factor (from business perspectives)

Seksyen D (i): Faktor Kemampanan Kategori (dari perspektif perniagaan)

46. 1. My business profit factor is by having extensive/global contact.

Faktor keuntungan perniagaan saya adalah dengan mempunyai hubungan yang meluas/global *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

47. 2. I did not make any loans within my first five years of business.

Saya tidak membuat sebarang pinjaman dalam tempoh 5 tahun pertama perniagaan saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

48. 3. I wisely manage the company's expenditure. Saya bijak menguruskan perbelanjaan syarikat *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

49. 4. I am eager to repay my bank loan debt.

Saya tidak sabar-sabar untuk membayar balik hutang pinjaman bank saya *Mark*

only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

50. 5. My planning is to expand the business further by developing more training centers.

Perancangan saya adalah untuk mengembangkan lagi perniagaan dengan membangunkan lebih banyak pusat latihan *Mark only*

one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

51. 6. I plan to train as many coaches as possible to increase the total number of coaches in my business.

Saya bercadang untuk melatih seberapa ramai jurulatih untuk menambah jumlah jurulatih dalam perniagaan saya *Mark only*

one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

52. 7. I have a plan to open new branch.

Saya mempunyai rancangan untuk membuka cawangan baru *Mark*

only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

53. 8. I want to have my own training centre. Saya ingin mempunyai pusat latihan sendiri

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

54. 9. I love to have strong network relationship. Saya suka mempunyai hubungan rangkaian yang kukuh *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

Section D (ii): Category Sustainability Factor (from business perspectives)

Seksyen D (ii): Faktor Kemampanan Kategori (dari perspektif perniagaan)

55. 10. I don't want to make any loans from bank. Saya tidak mahu membuat sebarang pinjaman daripada bank *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

56. 11. I love to maintain the relationship between the academy and the students as well as the parents of the students.

Saya suka menjaga hubungan antara pihak akademi dengan pelajar serta ibu bapa pelajar *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

57. 12. I love to maintain a good relationship between players and coaches. Saya suka mengekalkan hubungan baik antara pemain dan jurulatih *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

58. 13. I use my life experience to maintain my customer satisfaction.

Saya menggunakan pengalaman hidup saya sebagai cara untuk mengekalkan kepuasan pelanggan saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

59. 14. I maintain my customer by focusing on service quality.

Saya mengekalkan pelanggan saya dengan memberi tumpuan kepada kualiti perkhidmatan *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

60. 15. I never lend any loans.

Saya tidak pernah meminjamkan sebarang pinjaman *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

61. 16. I took out a loan early on to start up my business. Saya telah membuat pinjaman awal untuk memulakan perniagaan saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

62. 17. I never ask help from any agencies.
Saya tidak pernah meminta bantuan daripada mana-mana agensi *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

63. 18. I used an auto debit system for fees payment. Saya menggunakan sistem auto debit untuk pembayaran yuran *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

Section D (iii): Category Sustainability Factor (from business perspectives)

Seksyen D (iii): Faktor Kemampanan Kategori (dari perspektif perniagaan)

64. 19. I used my own experience without any role mentor for developing by business.
Saya menggunakan pengalaman saya sendiri tanpa sebarang mentor peranan untuk membangunkan perniagaan *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

65. 20. I have an academic qualification (Diploma or Degree or Master or PhD). Saya mempunyai kelayakan akademik (Diploma atau; Ijazah atau; Sarjana atau; PhD) *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

66. 21. I have a specific segment/product for my players. Saya mempunyai segmen/produk khusus untuk pemain saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

67. 22. I must have interest in sports business to become successful business owner. Saya mesti mempunyai minat dalam perniagaan sukan untuk menjadi pemilik perniagaan yang berjaya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

68. 23. I should have determination and knowledge before starting my business. Saya harus mempunyai keazaman dan pengetahuan sebelum memulakan perniagaan saya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

69. 24. I think I should ask for opinions from more knowledgeable people to become a successful business owner.

Saya rasa saya patut meminta pendapat daripada orang yang lebih arif untuk menjadi pemilik perniagaan yang berjaya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

70. 25. I think I should be sincere in doing my job to become a successful business owner. Saya rasa saya harus ikhlas menjalankan tugas untuk menjadi pemilik perniagaan yang berjaya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

71. 26. I think I should take care of my customer relation to become a successful business owner. Saya fikir saya harus menjaga hubungan pelanggan saya untuk menjadi pemilik perniagaan yang berjaya *Mark only one oval.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not True at all/ Sangat tidak setuju Definitely True/ Sangat bersetuju

Seksyen E: Kualiti Perkhidmatan

Section E: Quality of Services

72. 1. I rarely receive complaints from my customer. Saya jarang menerima aduan daripada pelanggan saya *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes/Ya
 No/Tidak

73. 2. Most of my customers who complained are the one who were unhappy.
Kebanyakan pelanggan saya yang merungut adalah mereka yang tidak berpuas hati *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes/Ya
 No/Tidak

74. 3. I will talk directly with my customer if any matter arises.
Saya akan bercakap terus dengan pelanggan saya jika timbul sebarang perkara *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes/Ya
 No/Tidak

75. 4. I usually text through Messengers and WhatsApp with my customers if any matter arises.
Saya biasanya menghantar mesej melalui Messenger dan WhatsApp dengan pelanggan saya jika timbul sebarang perkara
Mark only one oval.

- Yes/Ya
 No/Tidak

76. 5. I think the way to measure quality of service to the customer is to polish the coaching skills among the sports coaches.
Saya berpendapat cara untuk mengukur kualiti perkhidmatan kepada pelanggan adalah dengan menggilap kemahiran kejurulatihan di kalangan jurulatih sukan

Mark only one oval.

- Yes/Ya
 No/Tidak

Section F
: Contact
(Optional)

Information collected from respondents is kept strictly confidential. We recognize the trust that respondents place in us to protect their data. We follow strict rules to ensure the confidentiality of your information and your privacy.

77. Name

78. Phone Number

79. Email Address



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APPENDIX II : FGD PROTOCOL

Focus Group Discussion

“Determinant Factors for Sustainability of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) In Sports Coaching Business Industry in Malaysia”

16th January 2022

Double Tree Hilton, Putrajaya

There are 2 group comprises 5-5 in a round table. Each table has 1 moderator to moderate the session. Questions being asked and each participants provide their answer alternatively.

A. Determinant Factors

A.1 Category Determinant Factor (Individual)

Question 1: Can you describe your services? What is your **BIG WHY** doing this kind of business from your own personal value?

Question 2: How much time spending on coaching sessions a week from coaches' and athletes' perspectives?

Question 3: Knowledge formal, semi-formal, non-formal education on these activities.

Question 4: soft skills and technical skill management in delivering your services.

A.2 Category Determinant Factor (Organization)

Question 1: How are you managing your company from aspects Marketing, Operations, and Enabler (HR, Finance, and Admin)?

Question 2: How are you finding the right person for the right team in these three departments?

Question 3: What is the most crucial department from these three and why?

Question 4: What are the challenges of managing these three main departments?

Question 5: How you overcome the biggest challenges in managing an organization?

A.3 Category Determinant Factor (External)

Question 1: Define networking and political relationship in these activities.

Question 2: Demographic factor or customer segmentation characteristic impact your business.

Question 3: Strategic collaboration with other party's efficiency.

Question 4: How the technology impacts your business execution?

Strategic Planning, Financial Management, Human Capital, Market Positioning

Question 1: What are the factors responsible for your business profitability within the first 5 years?

Question 2: What planning strategies did you use during the first 5 years of your business operation?

Question 3: What strategies do you implement to attract, retain, and satisfy your customers?

Question 4: What role do start-up capital and finance from banks play in your business?

Question 5: Describe the support services available to you when you started.

Question 6: Explain the benefits of e-commerce for you and your customers.

Question 7: Describe the role that any professional advisors played in your business.

Question 8: Describe your educational background or training experience and that of your business team prior to the start of the business.

Question 9: Explain the features of your products, services, and marketing techniques.

Question 10: What else would you like to share of your experiences of becoming a successful small business owner?

B. Quality of Services

Question 1: What is your measurement subject to your customer?

Question 2: How do you measure your quality of service to the customer?

APPENDIX III : EXAMPLE OF CONTENT VALIDITY

Serial number



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
يُونَيْتِي سِيْتِي اِسْلَامِي اَبْتَار اِيْخْسَاب مِلْدِيْسِيَا

CONTENT VALIDITY

DETERMINANT FACTORS FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN SPORTS COACHING BUSINESS INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA

Assalamualaikum wbt,

Dear Prof/Assoc. Prof/Dr/Sir/Madam,

I am Mohd Rashid bin Jamiran, a PhD student of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). I am currently constructing an instrument to measure the determinant factors for sustainability of small and medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in sports coaching business industry in Malaysia

In order to do so, I wish to obtain your expert opinion on the questionnaire items which I have constructed based on the literature and findings of semi-structured interviews that I have conducted earlier. Your suggestions or modifications on the items will only be used for the purpose of this study and further improvement of the instrument.

Please find attached the expert assessment form to be filled in.

Your kind cooperation and assistance in completing the form is highly appreciated.

Researcher: Mohd Rashid bin Jamiran
Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)
53100 Gombak, Selangor
Mobile no: 017-267 3621
E-mail: hebohkite@gmail.com

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Rozailin Abdul Rahman
Chairman: Prof. Dr. Suhaimi Mhd Sarif

Name of expert:

LAILATUL FAIZAH ABU HASSAN

Designation:

Coordinator, Entrepreneurship / Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Business and
Management, UiTM

Signature:

Laila

Date:

30/3/2022



Instruction: The section below is divided into a few constructs under **business sustainability, determinant factor, quality of services, and personal value towards the sports coach**. Please tick (/) the appropriate column to indicate your opinion on the suitability of the item in measuring the proposed construct on a scale of 1 (clearly representative), 2 (somewhat representative), and 3 (not representative). Your comment on the item also would be highly appreciated.

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
Business Sustainability	Def: Refer to business sustainability of durability and the company's ability to continuously learn, develop and reorient the business to stay lasting in the market with a distinctive position.	1. I have been in this business for more than 5 years	1=Yes	/			
		2. I have made profit from my business coaching for more than 5 years	2=No	/			

3

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
Category Determinant Factor (Individual)	Def: Individual factors cover the entrepreneur characteristics, such as the owner and manager skills, personal characteristics, gender, and motivation. All Respondents set up sports academies and they were all interested in their respective fields. Big why for them is the interest and passion to set up an academy.	1. I am knowledgeable in my own sports coaching business	1=Not true at all	/			
		2. I am passionate in this sports coaching business	7=Very true	/			
		3. I am skillful in my own sports coaching activities		/			
		4. I spend my sports coaching 8 hours per week		/			
		5. I spend my sports coaching time during weekdays only		/			
		6. I spend my sports coaching time during weekend only		/			
		7. I spend my sports coaching time during weekdays and weekend		/			Recommended to split/separate this question/item to weekdays and weekend. Refer Item 5 & 6 – it been separated
		8. I have attended formal education activities		/			
		9. I have attended semi-formal education activities		/			

4

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
		10.I have attended non-formal education activities		/			
		11. I maintain a friendly relationship with my players during delivering my sports services		/			
		12. I will find coaches who like kids to deliver the sports services		/			
		13. I will provide a sufficient number of coaches and assistant coaches for each class session held.		/			
Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
Category Determinant Factor (Organization)	Def: Organisation factors are important to understand the key factor to sustain the business.	1. I manage my company by giving more attention to the enabler part (HR, Finance & Admin).	1=Not true at all	/			
		2. I like to divide the task for each branch	7=Very true	/			

5

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
	Employees need to be well managed in order to perform a high quality performed by people or human resources	3. I used FB ads and made bunting for my company marketing					
		4. I have more than 3 social media accounts to create my business advertisements					
		5. I find my family members as a right person for the financial department		/			Recommend: I hired my family members as a right person for the financial department
		6. I think my family members is the right person for managing the human resources department.					
		7. I have handed over some of the responsibilities to my own family (wife/siblings)					
		8. I think all Enabler (HR, Finance & Admin) is the most crucial department					
		9. I find management is the most important department as it does almost all the work					Recommend: I find Management Department is the most important department as it does almost all the work

6

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
		10. I find the biggest challenge is to train the coach		/			
		11. I find the biggest challenge is make court/halls/sports coaching venue available		/			Recommend: I find the biggest challenge is to make the court/halls/sports coaching venue available
		12. I find the biggest challenge is to find a truly qualified coach		/			
		13. I overcome the challenge by ensuring the quality of coaches who serve the academy at its highest level.		/			
		14. I will ensure the hall/court/sports coaching venue is booking for 3 consecutive month		/			
		15. I will ensure to provide sufficient number of coaches		/			

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
Category Determinant Factor (External) <u>-Politician</u> <u>-Investor</u>	Def: External factors also had a great influence on the sustainability of SMEs in terms of government policies and funds.	1. I am more likely to avoid involving the role of politicians	1=Not true at all	/			
		2. I don't need the network and politician relationship in this business	7=Very true	/			Recommend: I do not need the network and politician relationship in this business
		3. I have tried to get closer to politicians but to no avail		/			
		4. I never intended to make political connections because there was no need.		/			
		5. Factors that impact my business is there are no physical classes during Covid-19			/		
		6. Most of my players have stopped the training session because they are exhausted.				/	
		7. My customers are mostly from B40 groups					/
		8. My customers are mostly from M40 groups					/

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
		9. My customers are mostly from T20 groups			/		
		10. My customers are mostly from B40 and M40 groups			/		
		11. Some of my customers have children with autism			/		
		12. I will accept investors to invest in my sports business	/				
		13. I have never got an investor	/				
		14. I have mostly collaborated with school	/				
		15. I have a lot of cooperation with other parties especially with Higher education institutions	/				
		16. I have collaborated with pre-school	/				

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
		17. I have used an app to store student score		/		Recommend: I have invested on application to manage students' score	
		18. I have never used any technology tools so far	/			This statement/item is incomplete. Recommend: I have never invested on technology to sustain my business	
		19. I make full use of technology facilities to help my business	/				
		20. I use the payment method of fees by auto debit			/		

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
Category Sustainability Factor (from business perspectives) Strategic Planning, Financial Management, Human Capital, Market Positioning	Def: Factors required for small business sustainability are, (i) effective strategizing, (ii) flexible financial capital management, (iii) human capital development and, (iv) market positioning and sales.	1. My business profit factor is by having wide contact	1=Not true at all	/			
		2. I did not make any loans within my first 5 years of business		/			
		3. I wisely manage the company's spending money	7=Very true	/			
		4. I am eager to repay my bank loan debt		/			
		5. My planning is to expand the business further by developing more teaching centres		/			
		6. I plan to train as many coaches to increase the total number of coaches in my business		/			
		7. I have a plan to open new branch		/			
		8. I want to have my own hall		/			
		9. I love to have strong network relationship		/			
		10. I don't want to make any loans from bank		/			Recommend: I do not want to make any loans from bank

11

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
		11. I love to maintain the relationship between the academy and the students as well as the parents of the students.		/			
		12. I love to maintain the relationship between players and coaches		/			
		13. I use my life experience as a way to maintain my customer satisfaction		/			
		14. I maintain my customer by focusing on service quality		/			
		15. I never made any loans		/			
		16. I took out a loan early on to start up my business.		/			
		17. I never ask help from any agencies		/			
		18. I used an auto debit system for fees payment		/			
		19. I used my own experience without any role mentor for developing by business		/			
		20. I have an academic qualification (Diploma or; Degree or; Master or; PHD)		/			Recommend: All my coaches are certified trainer in sports management OR

12

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
							I have certification/degree in sports management
		21. I have a specific segment/product for my players		/			
		22. I must have interest in sports business to become successful business owner		/			
		23. I should have determination and education before starting my business		/			
		24. I think I should ask for opinions from more knowledgeable people to become a successful business owner		/			Recommended: To be a successful business owner, I believe I should seek advice from more knowledgeable individuals.
		25. I think I should be sincere in doing my job to become a successful business owner		/			
		26. I think I should take care of my customer relation to become a successful business owner		/			Recommend: To be a successful business owner, I believe I should prioritise my client relationships.

Construct	Variable, Dimensions & Operational Definition	Questionnaire items development	Response Category	Expert Assessment [please tick (/)]			Comments
				Clearly representative 1	Somewhat representative 2	Not representative 3	
Quality of Services	Def: Quality of services from coaches to players or customers is important to determine their satisfaction that leads to good communication and good results of the sports coaching activities.	1. I rarely receive complaints from my customer	1=Yes	/			
		2. Most of my customers who complain are the one who leftovers	2=No	/			
		3. I will talk face to face with my customer if any matter arise		/			Recommend: If a problem arises, I will speak with my consumer face to face.
		4. I usually message or WhatsApp with my customer if any matter arise		/			
		5. I think the way to measure quality of service to the customer is by honing the skills of the coaches		/			Recommend: I believe that honing the abilities of the coaches is the best way to gauge the level of service provided to customers.